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The Spadassin

by
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SPADASSIN has in it the Italian for sword, just as *gunman* has in it the Manhattan for automatic pistol, and either word visualizes the identical insufferable pestilence of a bully with his weapon. The spadassin was merely earlier as to type, but the cruel, cynical ruffian in him was the same. His methods, too, had a startling family resemblance, except for certain variations imposed by the customs and notions of his day.

You are living, let us say, in the year 1720 or 1820, and you covet your neighbor's—well, any of those things of his specified in the Decalogue—and by removing him you clear your path to the coveted article. You may do either of two things. You may insult him and slay him in a duel, which is the proper way. There is one drawback; he may kill you. Very well, then. Instead of risking your own precious body, you engage a led cap-

tain, the spadassin, to do your insulting and, consequently, your fighting. If the spadassin gets killed, that is his business. Besides, as he accepts the job on a contingency fee, you are out only the retainer. However, because it is his business, he does not get killed—usually. This is the second method. It is not so proper, but there are compensations; in its certainty, for instance. Your neighbor *has* to fight; else he is classed forever after with puppy dogs. So you quite approve of the notions that obtain in your year of 1720 or 1820; unless, perhaps, your neighbor takes it into his head to covet something that is yours. All are clients who knock at the spadassin's door, and your neighbor may get to him first.

Captain Jeffers, as a rule, operated on his own account. This kept him a gentleman and was more seemly, as he held the king's commission. In Martinique, especially,

Captain Jeffers found much ripe picking for his game bag, which was his purse, after he and the Grenadiers, along with General Monckton's red jackets and Admiral Rodney's frigates, had taken the dozing isle away from France, to keep it for a year and a month. These thirteen months dated from January in 1762.

The *habitants*, or Creole planters, were a naïve and peppery folk. They generally had patents of nobility, and they knew the proud, hereditary obligation that distinguishes the wearer of a sword, which is to fight if anybody looks at anybody else crosseyed. And Captain Jeffers was crosseyed. Of course there was ripe picking.

The captain had to reduce the population somewhat at first. But this was an integral part of his method in a new place, until the deadliness of his blade became apparent. Besides, it afforded, meantime, that modicum of pleasure which no gentleman's business should be without.

He has just killed, we will say, the Chevalier de la Pépinière, because the Chevalier, descendant of a sea rover, resented having his shoe buckle muddled by a Hessian boot; wherefore he challenged the captain, and the captain chose swords. The captain always chose swords. The captain, returning from this day's business, asks his second and other brother officers into the *Taverne aux Marins*, and there they dice till late at his favorite table, when he minds him that he has nothing on for the morrow, a lack which must be mended. He pushes back his bottle, and knits his brows over the public room, screwing his crossed vision into focus. M. de Millefleurs is over by the door, quietly talking freights with a bearded ship's captain. M. de Millefleurs is shipping his sugar this year to Brest, and he has ridden in from his estate to see it safely off.

"Sir—*mousseer moi*," Captain Jeffers shouts in his rough, blustering attempt at Creole French, "what the devil, let me tell you, you palsy my wrist with your jargon. They all come deuces and trays, and I lose my last crown because of your gabbing. Eh—*bon Di*—you, I mean!"

De Millefleurs is to the manner educated. He has had his schooling in Paris. He has seen the king at Versailles. He has not forgotten the way of a courtier with Death. Then, the presence of these conquering pigs in his island galls him.

"If monsieur will deign to teach me to hold my tongue." He says it nonchalantly enough as to words, but with twitching lips, and the pepper in his blood breaks out all over him.

"Ay, will I, damme?" says Captain Jeffers.

"A friend of mine—" begins de Millefleurs, trembling in wrath.

"Send your friend," the bully cuts in. "I can spare you ten minutes at nine in the morning. The usual place; in the avenue by the mangrove swamp. Swords. Mine's the choice. Ay, I'll be there, my strutting buck, were you Brissac himself. I will," he says, "or you can construe it into an apology."

He says it in the manner of vowing that as soon will old Pelée fly her base as he not be there, but it is remarked that he always says it.

At nine, as a matter of course, in the shaded aisle of the mangroves, M. de Millefleurs is taught to stay his tongue, for good.

It will have been observed in the foregoing that Captain Jeffers was the aggressor, and hence the challenged, and that he pitilessly chose swords. A suspicion of his system may from this begin to ooze. His peer at fence he had never met. The spadassin was safe there. Only Brissac, whom he jealously men-

tioned, he perhaps feared. But the duellist Brissac batted on warm blood far away. His fame alone had crossed the ocean, but the *habitants* could not hope that Brissac in person would ever do so for the removal of their scourge. If indeed, after Captain Jeffers, Brissac might not be as bad, or worse!

For a time Captain Jeffers killed his man every day, until he wearied of simple pleasure and brooded over a collapsing purse. He chafed for the business phase of his system to emerge. He had ceased to count on cowardice. Evidently the hot-headed planters did not know the word, even though they knew now that an encounter with the remorseless grenadier was passport to the grave.

"But," grumbled the captain to himself, "has never one of them an aged mother at all, or do all the wives of this island languish to be widows, that not a wench among 'em will sell her rings and niggers to buy me off? Must a gentleman take to brigandage to coax forth a ransom . . . Bah, 'tis good swordsmanship gone to waste!"

This, however, was before he shouldered Jean Passy into the ditch. Jean Passy boasted no patent of nobility, but he had the largest sugar house around Fort Royal and ground cane for the landed and patented gentry. Jean essayed no non-chalant words. Nor did his lips twitch. He came back at the burly captain in frank and honest wrath, with a stout cane. Captain Jeffers clipped the cane in twain, with his sword.

"Mohawk," choked Jean Passy, helpless, "won't you fight then?"

"*Dié moi*, a challenge?" sneered the captain, but putting the thing in order.

"Anything, so we fight, cannibal," said Jean.

"It's swords, then," said the cap-

tain. "And at nine to-morrow, among the mangroves, we'll dance our little *calienda*."

"At—at nine," Jean repeated mechanically, somewhat dazed.

"At nine, be there, *petit moi*," the captain's ominous voice drowned his, "and if I'm not—" he laughed hoarsely at the rich humor—"construe it into an apology for ditching you."

Aimée Rose, the wife of Jean, had almost been ditched herself; and she had heard it all, she, Aimée Rose, with her very literal ears.

No one was more surprised than Jean Passy that the deadly Captain Jeffers did not keep the appointment next morning. Captain Jeffers had drunk tempestuously the night before, and he had overslept. Half of Fort Royal could vouch for the first, recognizing the thunder of his song and his oaths issuing from the *Taverne aux Marins*. His fellow officers of the barracks vouched for the second. They had tried to rouse him, but only enough to obtain muttered queries as to whether they'd like to be carved like cold mutton. Privately they concluded it best to let a sleeping dog lie, and they might have punned on the reflection had they suspected.

One small and resourceful person in Fort Royal could have told them that the dog did lie, and she was Aimée Rose, wife of Jean Passy.

Aimée Rose could have told Jean something, too, but did not; and as Aimée Rose kept the accounts of the sugar house, Jean never found it out. He only knew that Captain Jeffers, with a grimace, swore that a gentleman must keep his word; and defied anyone to deny that he, Captain Jeffers, kept his. Out of which grew the inference, as Aimée Rose pointed out to Jean, that Captain Jeffers' failure to keep the appointment was to be construed as an apology; and

Jean, become again a cooled burgher of discretion, considered honor abundantly satisfied. Furthermore, Captain Jeffers once more knew the heft of a full purse.

So the spadassin's method began to work out at last, and the casting of good swordsmanship on the shambles to bring forth returns; for if the hotly sensitive lords of the isle doted on being butchered, their ladies were differently minded for them. It came about then that the spadassin, like many a gentler male—poet, parson, or book-agent—looked to the women for the buttering of his bread. He had but to contrive his provocative insolence when and where there'd be one of them in the audience, and the thing worked with the easy charm of an arsenic powder. By night the family circle of him who had challenged Captain Jeffers knew of the doom scheduled for nine the next day; and mother, wife or sister, with jewels, heirlooms or gold wrung at bitter cost from the town usurer, would buy off the man of blood.

From then on, during those thirteen months, the women of Fort Royal and the estates surrounding were industriously keeping whole the bodies of their naïve menfolk, thanks originally to Aimée Rose's gift of two literal ears. The men never knew, of course, and since no blow went with the insult, they were constrained to accept the captain's failure to appear on the field of honor as an apology.

The captain, those days, overslept much, and profitably. He was often heard to lament, in bluff, wry gaiety, that a gentleman could not long drive two hobbies tandem. The nightly bottle, he said, was interfering more and more with his morning exercise in the mangrove avenue. The bottle explained it. No one questioned his courage, you may be

sure. That was infamously established already, like an institution, like a Minotaur insatiable for tribute of flesh or treasure. Never had a crueler bully trod spike-shod over a peace-loving community. Lacking a St. George, the Martinicos longed even for the truculent Brissac, so only the breath of this gory leech be let out by a sluiceway of cold steel. But hope they could not. Brissac was in Paris, and a busy man, slashing his furious course, despite edicts against dueling. No freak of chance would ever bring him to Martinique.

The poignantly glad tidings came at last that France and England had reckoned seven years of war enough for the present and would try peace for a while. The poignantly glad part of it, to the Martinicos, was that Martinique had been restored by George III to Louis XV, and that the British garrison was to embark at once. Which meant Captain Jeffers. The Martinicos had not minded the Seven Years' War so much, but thirteen months of Captain Jeffers had been well nigh insupportable. For them the lilies of France, hoisted once again over Fort Saint-Louis, held more of jubilation than mere recession of their island. The white purity of the fleurs-de-lis was a promise that they were to be purged of a festering canker.

A warship of His Most Christian Majesty brought the news to Fort Royal, and warships of His Britannic Ditto bore away the garrison—grenadiers, all—except Captain Jeffers!

For Captain Jeffers there was still cream for the skimming. A private gentleman with his sword fared better here than an officer with the king's commission at Barbados or Saint Lucia. When a treaty trusses up one's profession of war, damme, one must turn to the pursuits of peace. Captain Jeffers auctioned off

the king's commission, and stayed behind in Fort Royal.

The afflicted city sought to forget its old man of the sea in its preparations to welcome the first governor under the restored sovereignty of France. No one knew whom the king would send out, but he'd be a Frenchman, and that was the best of it in any case. The treaty had been signed in February, and June had now come; and the avenues of palms and the rose gardens were gay with bunting and flags and arches and all the appointments of a provincial carnival, for the king's ship with the new governor aboard was expected daily in the bay. Nothing must soil the splendor of this greeting that lay so near loyal French hearts.

Exactly because nothing must, Captain Jeffers conceived therein his meanest *coup*, his genius surpassing itself.

M. le Maire, portly, beaming, of robust and hearty dignity, was Fort Royal's dearest ornament, and the spirit and the warmth of the island's hospitality. He it was, not alone officially, but as echo of the colony's very heartbeat, who should voice the general delight that a Frenchman was come again to rule and to cherish. The generous islanders felt a child-like satisfaction that at such a time they had a mayor who so fittingly and wholesomely and yet with ponderous distinction would uphold Martinique's part in the solemn ceremony of welcome.

It was at this juncture that Captain Jeffers, while celebrating a fatal encounter of the morning, said in his cups that fat displaced belligerence, and he'd yet to see the man of paunch who would fight. Mousseer le Maire, for instance—damme, the very tub on which to prove his theory!

His thinking of the mayor seemed

a quirk of maudlin inspiration, but it was really the cold calculation of a black heart. He had taken tribute of women; but for the mayor, and at a time when the mayor was so fondly and indispensably in demand, he would exact a ransom of the whole town, and only his greed could tell the figure of that ransom. At the first opportunity he meant to insult the mayor and receive his challenge; after which it would be for the town to save its mayor, or have none to welcome the new governor.

The misguided friend, who never fails to appear when least needed, appeared in this, and promptly next day informed M. le Maire of the captain's vaporings concerning fat men and of the captain's reference to M. le Maire. The friend's idea was that the mayor, in his tenderness for the town, would keep out of the captain's way and so avoid provocation to a duel. The mayor's idea was different. Forthwith strode the mayor from the *mairie* and directed his short legs towards the *Taverne aux Marins*, where he'd most likely find the captain. His women folk intercepted him at the door. A good friend had been to them, too. There followed a scene of much emotion to overcome the stubbornness of the plump though doughty burgomaster; only the stubbornness of him was not to be overcome.

Was he a child, the good man expostulated, showing an apoplectic face to his three daughters, that he might not be out on the street alone? Could he not, he demanded of his wife, step in for a game of *écarté* with his old cronies? Then it was his duty—*oui, oui, mesdames*—duty—to go in. He frowned stupendously, hustling forward his official character to command where the *père de famille* had been subdued. Downright duty, yes, because the sloop *Jacinthe* from St. Thomas was

just in the bay, and the *patron* coming ashore was certain to chart a course for the Taverne, and he might have news of the overdue king's ship with the new governor aboard, and it behooved the mayor to acquire such intelligence the first of any, and . . . But they laid the feeble hands of agonized womankind on him, and he was a helpless babe.

"My good friends, one thousand pardons."

It was the voice of a stranger. They knew that before they turned and beheld him. The accent was of Paris. The inflection was the liquid, feathery current whereon courtiers floated their compliments. Accent and inflection together could belong to none they knew in Fort Royal. They turned. The slim figure in pearl gray they had never seen before. To their provincial eyes he was all they had dreamed of exquisite elegance; graceful and pleasing, not young yet scarcely middle-aged, with powdered hair and a ribbon, heels of red to his shoes, a slender cane to his hand, and lace falling over rosy fingers.

The mayor elbowed himself free of family and neighbors, and bent his rounded torso in hospitable intent.

"Monsieur arrives by the St. Thomas sloop?" he asked.

The stranger nodded with a ready smile, and repeated a gesture of apology for disturbing them. He wished to enter the Taverne, and they were blocking the door.

"From St. Thomas, good!" said the mayor, with an I-told-you-so triumph over his women folk. He bowed for the stranger to precede him into the Taverne; and, the stranger having touched his hat and entered, the mayor started to follow. Not the least use in the world, that maneuver. Wife and daughters were clinging to him again. The

stranger paused in the doorway at the renewed clamor, an expression of polite wonderment in the slight lifting of his penciled brows.

"Not in there, gross simpleton, I tell you," cried the mayor's wife to the mayor, naturally. "Must you know, then? Eh, but wait, wait, *mon amour!* It is because the Capitaine Jeffair will find you to twist your nose and enrage you to fight him, so that he may kill you, the assassin, and there'll be no mayor to welcome His Excellency the governor, God bless him if he'd only come, for it was but last night that this drunken Jeffair has said—"

The stranger's amiable gray eyes quickened imperceptibly at mention of Captain Jeffers, and at the second fall of the name he stepped down the one step and craved the honor of a word apart with Madame la Maire.

The mayor's wife in a daze let herself be led from the group by the courtly stranger. His word spoken, he left her stupefied, although able to gesticulate commands for her daughters to join her. Thus the mayor was freed.

"*Bon Dieu, monsieur,*" he gaped at the stranger, "if you would but tell me the secret of it! Your way with the women—"

The stranger laughed deprecatingly, and took the mayor's arm. Together they entered the Taverne aux Marins, the women and neighbors only staring dumbly at the doorway.

"Pardon, monsieur," begged mine host of the Taverne, running forward, "the table here is as good. That one—"

"That one—" repeated the stranger, his inflection rising.

"Oh, that one is always for the Capitaine Jeffair, sir."

"Even so, it seems no worse," and the stranger bowed for M. le Maire to be seated first at the table.

"But monsieur is a stranger," the host persisted anxiously. "He cannot know how dangerous a man is the Capitaine—"

"On the contrary," interrupted the stranger, "I heard much of M. le Capitaine Jeffers during my day's stop at St. Thomas. Now if you please, my good fellow, M. le Maire and myself desire to pledge better acquaintance in a jorum of your famed planter's punch."

"Monsieur will not be warned?" quavered the host.

But, reluctantly, he had to leave them to their peril. Even the mayor was obdurate, and would have no other table but that. Mine host had taken a liking to the elegant stranger, and inwardly cursed the spadassin who would lose him this guest, also.

The punch was brought, sharpened by a lime and sweetened by sugar, as cool for a hot June in the tropics as water from the monkey-bottle hanging in the breeze under the silk-cotton outside could make it. The mayor forebore asking his companion's name, which was not volunteered, and, besides, he was keener to learn the news from St. Thomas, should there be any, of the king's ship and the new governor. The stranger, it appeared, not only had news, but was most obliging, so that, directly, the mayor was so lost in the charm of his new-found friend that he forgot entirely the murderous bully he had come here to meet.

The stranger was happy to inform M. le Maire that the king's ship with the governor and suite had put into St. Thomas for a new topmast, having been swept out of her course by rough weather; and to assure him that the vessel would not be much longer delayed.

"Do you know, monsieur," said the mayor, "that we as yet are ignorant of whom the king is sending

us? There in St. Thomas you must have heard, perhaps even have seen him. Who—"

The other smiled indulgently on his eager curiosity. "What would you say, you Martinicos, to a cousin of the king?"

The mayor flushed a happy red. "His Majesty," he exclaimed, "honors us with a prince of the blood!"

"Oh, only a third cousin," said the stranger, "and a wild fellow he is, at that."

"Sir," said the mayor earnestly, "let me beg, we others here, we can listen to no slurs against our new—"

"Oh, but listen," said the stranger, in no way offended. "Listen. He fought a duel, this wild fellow, and the king was much grieved, for it was against the edicts. He killed his man."

"Good!" sighed the stubborn mayor.

"And the king, to punish him, though not as much as he deserved, exiled him from the court, from Paris, from France. He sends him here to be your governor. Oh, but," the stranger hastened to add, "your governor will think exile here no punishment, for of all the beauty spots of the world, of all lovable colonists . . . That coarse fellow who just entered cannot, I think, be one of them."

The mayor looked, and choler overspread his rubicund cheeks. The coarse fellow who had just entered was Captain Jeffers, late of the British Grenadiers.

The captain stood, glowering, to see his table occupied. He centered his crossed vision on the mayor, and started forward to lift him from his chair. That should be the insult to provoke him to a challenge. But then he perceived that the mayor's companion was a stranger, a promising stranger richly attired, a stranger undoubtedly of wealth, and

therefore of promise to a freebooting adventurer. The mayor could wait. The other was the more tempting morsel. It was, then, the stranger that he meant to hurl from the table. But again he paused. This was a Parisian fop, this popinjay, and no tropic-heated *habitant* who would fight Death in person. The dandy would save his skin with his purse. Yes, but the pretty lad must be properly terrorized first. A stranger, he might not know that Captain Jeffers was Death in person. A little informative episode would make the purse more readily forthcoming.

"Ola, thou robber of the thirsty," he bellowed in his hoarse patois to the inn-keeper, "a water-nut, before I clip thine ears."

The host brought him the cocoanut, trembling. The captain was in his blackest vein. He drew his sword, holding the nut before him in his left hand, and adroitly slashed off the top. But the stranger was oblivious, talking companionably to the mayor. The mayor shifted uneasily. The doorway was filled with drawn, frightened faces, the mouths agape.

Captain Jeffers put the nut to his lips and drank off the liquid. "A bottle," he roared, "or—"

The host ran to him with a bottle of rum. The captain struck off the neck and filled the nut from it. That he also drank off at a gulp. A terrible person! But the stranger chatted obliviously on.

"Well, damme!" muttered the captain.

Every jaw hung slack as he stalked over to the unconscious Parisian. He stood over him, leering, teetering on the balls of his feet, the while filling the nut again from the bottle.

"Sir," he said, thrusting the nut under the stranger's nose, "drink!"

The stranger looked up into the

crossed, red-rimmed eyes, smiled, shook his head, and went on talking with the mayor.

The captain pulled an end of his moustache between his teeth. Then, slowly, he drew back the nut, aiming the rum at the stranger's face. Without looking up, the stranger put up his hand, flirted back his wrist—the motion as swift and invisible as the dart of a hummingbird—and the cocoanut with its contents was dashed to the floor. The stranger had not faltered for a syllable in what he was saying to the mayor.

"You puny macaroni!" roared the captain, thrusting toward him, lost in rage.

The stranger rose like a streak of gray, bringing up his hand slashwise. The upward cut of it caught the captain under the chin. The clack of the bully's teeth was heard to the door. His mouth gave forth a fountain of blood. His tongue had been between them.

"I assume, monsieur," spoke the stranger, idly brushing the edge of his hand with a snowy fleck of handkerchief, "that you will desire satisfaction."

"Satisfaction? I'll have out your heart!" bellowed the captain.

"Precisely," agreed the stranger. "Any friend—"

"Were you Brissac himself—"

A light frown at the name crossed the stranger's smooth brow. "Any friend of yours," he went on, "will find me at M. le Maire's."

"But—" said the captain.

"You wish satisfaction?"

"But—"

"Then send your friend. Man, man, I will honor your cartel."

"But the weapons?"

"Oh," said the other, seeming to become thoughtful, "the weapons? I would tell your friend when—if—you send him, as to my choice."

"Swords?" demanded the captain.

The stranger looked him in the eye, coolly, insolently; then laughed outright, laughed with lilting mirth. "No, you cur, *pistols!*"

The captain's blood-smeared face underwent a horrible contortion, which none, excepting the stranger, understood just then. The grimace, fading out, carried with it the scowl of unbridled anger like so much filth through a sink, and left on the tortured visage a sediment of ashen pallor. They understood less than ever. It looked so like poltroon fear, a thing incredible in the spadassin.

"You dare not," he snarled, and now even the naïve *habitants* began to perceive that it was desperate bluster, "dare not fight me with swords."

"Dare not?" The stranger's eyes flashed, and palpably there was a struggle within against temptation. Then his blithe laugh broke merrily. "Why, thou cur," he said, "I have received no insult, no blow. It's not for me to challenge, but thou, and for once it's not for thee the choice of weapons. Mine's the choice, and I have told thee pistols. Quickly, name now the time, the place."

"But—but," stammered Captain Jeffers, "I have not challenged you."

"Oh—I see," mused the stranger aloud; then: "Most despicable coward!"

"Damme, for that—" The captain plucked out his sword and rushed, but went back on his heels before a leveled pistol in the pudgy hand of the mayor.

"It is my duty," said the mayor, "to prevent murder."

"And save the dog," added the stranger, "from hanging."

"I was looking for you," the captain sputtered at the mayor, gathering the rage of his manhood, "you—"

But before the insult could pass his lips, the mayor anticipated him.

"Thou cur," said the mayor, and slapped him ringingly on the mouth. "And mine's pistols."

The place was flooded with townsmen. They were grinning, the grins remorseless. The first to reach the captain was Jean Passy.

"Two—three curs!" he shouted, as he delivered the slap. "Mine's pistols."

Others were eager for their turn, but the pleasant stranger checked them.

This stranger was a benefactor who gives to mankind a formula, a nostrum, for preserving life. And the simplicity of it appealed irresistibly to the child-like Martinicos. They all wanted to try it. One had but to insult Captain Jeffers first; then choose pistols. The secret of the formula was this: Captain Jeffers would not fight with pistols. With pistols the chances were evened; at least there was a chance against Captain Jeffers, and the captain took no chances. He did not challenge even Jean Passy, and he saw the very stable boy coming. He put down his head, covering his face with his arm, and charged through the doorway, ecstatic jeers following him. It was learned the next day that he tramped to St. Pierre, and there left the island forever on a fishing vessel.

The passage he made for himself through the door of the Taverne was filled immediately by Madame le Maire and her daughters coming in.

"God bless His Excellency! God bless His Excellency!" they wept in their joy, bobbing blinded curtsies to the stranger.

"His Ex—" gasped the mayor.

"Gross simpleton, don't you know?" cried Madame. "He told us himself but just now, and we

knew he would save you from that Jeffair. He—he is our dear, good, bonny new governor!"

The mayor's eyes, the eyes of Martinique, so to speak, rounded big on the charming and exquisite stranger.

"Y-Your Highness," stammered the mayor.

"The wild fellow of whom we were talking," said the stranger, the cousin of a king.

"But we meant to welcome Your Highness," said the distressed mayor. "And so beautiful a ceremony we had prepared—"

"Which Captain Jeffers meant to ruin for us all," the new governor interposed soothingly. "Good friends, try to understand this whim of mine. At St. Thomas I learned of this plague, this captain blood-sucker, from which you were suffering; and I decided that my first act among you should be to rid you of the incubus."

"But," objected the mayor in consternation at the thought, "he did

not know Your Highness; what if he had challenged—"

"I understand," laughed the governor. "You are thinking that His Majesty, having banished me for dueling, would not relish a duel as the first act of my exile. But, you see, there was no danger. None, whatever."

"You—Your Highness—the man you killed, there in Paris?" said the wondering, worshiping mayor.

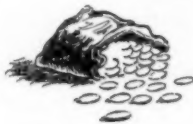
"Oh yes. A specimen named Brissac."

"Brissac, the best swordsman of France?"

"With swords, yes."

"And you did not choose swords against Jeffair?"

"To let him die a brave man, that coward?" The new governor smiled his altogether charming smile. "Well, hardly, my dear friend. Hark, guns at the fort? Ah, yes, a greeting to the king's ship in the bay. I perceive that I have arrived. Permit that I myself assist in the ceremonies of welcome."



FOUND

BY THOMAS GRANT SPRINGER

A VIOLET dropped in the street
 From a carelessly tied bouquet;
 Untouched by hurrying feet—
 A violet dropped in the street—
 And the breath of its death is sweet
 To the tenement tot at play.
 A violet dropped in the street
 From a carelessly tied bouquet.

THE BLACK PRINCE AND MIRIAM

BY PHILIP CHESNEY

THE bridle paths were almost deserted. The soft, padding sound of The Prince's footfalls, as he trotted slowly along, fretting a little under the restraint put upon him on this beautiful June day, formed a dull, rhythmic accompaniment in Rodney Parker's ears to the thoughts that were tormenting him. He leaned forward in his saddle and patted the horse's glossy neck.

"Prince, old boy," he said. "We're up against it this time, I'm afraid."

The Prince arched his neck under the caress, and did all that was possible for him to do to convey his sympathy and his willingness to be of service in the situation which confronted them. Parker frowned deeply.

"We can't fight Consolidated Equipment without munitions of war, and where they're to come from, Heaven only knows. We're mortgaged to the hilt, as it is—both of us."

The Prince shied playfully at a fluttering bit of paper to remind his master that they were both still in excellent bodily condition in spite of threatening storm clouds on their business horizon, and slowed down to a walk as they turned over toward the Park entrance.

Parker had been knocking about the stables all morning in his oldest clothes, and in a state of mind bordering on desperation. He had always maintained that The Prince was his best counsellor and his safest guide. What he meant was that, whenever he had a knotty problem to solve, either of business or mechanics, he was very apt to postpone a

serious consideration of it until he could get away from the crowded city and be alone with The Prince on a soft country road. And with The Prince between his knees and the winds of Heaven blowing in his face, he had found it easy to unravel many snarls that had presented themselves since he began to perfect his A. C. Automatic Transformer.

He was glad to have the Prince back with him in the city now. The impulse which had led him to bring him over himself, instead of sending him with the groom in the morning, as he had originally intended to do, was an outgrowth of his mood and of the comfort The Prince had given him in the stall, nibbling at his pockets for sugar, and otherwise making show of his affection.

As they turned into the path leading around the reservoir, they saw coming toward them a girl in gray coat and breeches and tan boots, accompanied by a groom.

Mechanically he noticed that she sat her mount exceedingly well—so well, in fact, that as she came nearer he felt himself watching her with that critically appreciative glance one good rider always gives another. He nodded approvingly at her perfect balance and square, erect seat, scanned her mount for flaws without finding any, and let his eyes rest for a moment on the face of the girl herself.

And then he forgot horse and horsemanship, and his own harassing problems, for in that fleeting moment he recognized her face as the one face in all the world for him. Not that he had ever seen it before. The

girl was a stranger to him—worse luck! But he vowed that she should remain one no longer than was necessary for him to put an end to that regrettable state of affairs. It was amazing how much that one brief glance revealed to him, for she had passed him at a canter. But he had had a vision of heavy masses of dark hair and healthily flushed cheeks and eyes that glowed beneath their curving brows, and he knew that he had found what he had been hunting for all his life.

"What a beauty!" he exclaimed involuntarily. "Did you see her, Prince? Did you ever see anything like her in your life?"

She was gone, and reluctantly he set himself to a reconsideration of his problem, putting aside the haunting vision of her loveliness, but making sure, however, that it was where it could be recalled again to its proper place the moment he had leisure for its contemplation.

The reins sagged loosely over The Prince's neck, and Parker lost himself in study of the problem he had to face in the morning. The strong play of The Prince's muscles under his glossy skin, the consciousness of the perfect understanding existing between them seemed to lend him fresh strength for his task.

Three times they made the circuit of the reservoir, and three times The Prince had prepared himself for a canter, but the man on his back gave no sign that the end of his problem was in sight.

Beneath his loosely flexed knees Parker felt a sudden tremor of the great rippling muscles, that did not belong to the sedateness of the gait. The Prince's ears pricked backward nervously, his neck strained at attention, and he tugged impatiently and almost urgently on the bit. There was a spring of impatience and restraint in his stride. And then, far

behind them, Parker caught the very ghost of a sound that carried him back, quick as thought itself, away to other scenes and other surroundings, back to the dust and hurry and excitement of the paddock after saddling-up time, back to the fearful repression of the slow parade before the judge's stand, and back—to the wild burst of speed that followed the dropping of the flag as each horse and each rider strained to the utmost to get his chosen position and maintain it.

There was no mistaking that swiftly flying, rhythmic beat that set his nerves a-tingle. He glanced over his shoulder to the broad sweep of the path behind him. Far back and coming at racing speed, he saw a horse flying, head thrown high and crazed with fear, and on his back a blur of gray. Nearer and nearer they came, and in a flash, Rodney recognized horse and rider—recognized, too, that the girl had lost all control.

He wheeled The Prince sharply, leaning well over his withers, as they raced back to meet the wildly flying pair. The Prince understood what was required of him.

Parker saw the drawn face of the girl, ghastly white against the mass of her dark hair, set in a terrified expression of impotence as she tried with frantic, futile efforts to regain control of the crazy animal. Under the horse's belly flapped a broken girth, slapping at his legs and frightening him the more. If her saddle should turn! He breathed a prayer between his clenched teeth.

Nearer and nearer they came, the bay horse swerving as he reached them, his neck strained forward, his nostrils red and distended. The Prince caught his stride as he ranged alongside, extending himself to the utmost to keep the pace. Parker lay out along his neck, lifting him for-

ward with every step, as they edged closer and closer to the runaway. They galloped along, side by side, and almost stride for stride, waiting—waiting—they were still too far apart. The risk was too great. Not yet—not yet—if the saddle should turn!

For a fleeting second he felt her knee crowded against his. In a flash his arm was around her waist, her feet were free of the stirrups, and with a mighty effort he lifted her clear and swung her over in front of him. She lay against his breast, breathless. Fine strands of her hair blew about his eyes, its perfume mounting to his brain like strong wine. The Prince, under the double burden, came to a stop, while the riderless horse dashed madly on. He held her in his arms, all warm and palpitating for one deathless moment. Then he lifted her gently to the ground.

"The saddle—" she gasped. "The girth broke—" She covered her eyes with her hands, and leaned weakly against The Prince's shoulder, sobbing hysterically. "You've saved me from—it would have been horrible!"

He quieted her as best he could. Her groom came up and she pulled herself together, sending him on after the runaway. They could see him, still galloping, on the other side of the water, with two park policemen in hot pursuit. She took a step or two toward the fence, and stopped weakly. Parker steadied her with a hand on her shoulder.

"It's all over," he said. "And personally—" he looked at her quizzically, "if it had to happen, I'm glad it happened when I was around. You shouldn't have trusted yourself to that fellow, if your tackle was rotten."

She looked at him queerly and drew herself up with a suspicion of hauteur in her manner. "He's never

bolted before," she said rather stiffly.

"Not with you, perhaps," he laughed. He turned and watched the progress of the race on the other side of the water. "They've got him," he said.

The girl looked at him uneasily. "I must thank you," she said. "It was very plucky of you—very cleverly managed—" she stumbled a little over her words. "If the saddle had turned—you have probably saved my life—there is really nothing I can say—"

"And nothing for you to say, is there?" He turned and looked her full in the eye. "I could not very well let you go on alone, could I? Really, though, you shouldn't take such risks."

She flushed in annoyance, and drew away from him. Her groom arrived, leading the runaway, flanks heaving and lathered from head to tail. The policemen stopped to make inquiries. "I'm all right," she told them, "everything is all right, thanks." She examined the broken girth and told the groom to cinch up the other.

"You're surely not going to get on that fellow again," protested Rodney. "Won't you take mine to get home with?"

"It's perfectly safe," she said stiffly. "He's had his run." She swung herself into the saddle and fumbled about in her pocket. "I'm very grateful," she said, and held out her hand. "Will you—?"

Rodney extended his hand to take hers, but her fingers eluded his, and he felt something round and heavy in his palm.

"Thanks, so much," she said again briefly, and trotted off. He gazed at the gold piece in bewilderment for a moment, not comprehending. Then he glanced at his shabby clothes and the disreputable cap which he was holding in his hand, and its meaning

came to him in a flash. The humor of the situation touched him, and he chuckled heartily. He tossed the yellow coin into the air, and caught it again, still laughing, then turned to watch her progress down the path. He put foot to stirrup, after a minute or two, and swung into his seat.

"Prince, old boy," he confided to his friend. "She took us for a pair of grooms—and I don't know that I blame her so much, either."

II

Miriam Van Courtland lived with her aunt in the house which old Anthony Van Courtland, at one time head of Consolidated Equipment, had left her as well as his controlling interest in that great corporation. She had few secrets from her aunt, but she decided to say nothing about her escapade in the park. When she reached home she went straight to her room. Standing before the mirror, she saw that she was still flushed and excited.

As she stood there with the glow of the adventure still on her face, lighting up its dark olive skin like a golden sunset, she felt again the horror of that wild gallop.

"How strong he must be!" she said to herself. "And what a horseman! I suppose I shouldn't have got angry with him after he had saved my life. After all, he didn't say very much."

She began to take off her riding clothes slowly, having sent her maid away a little impatiently. First she loosened her hair, and let it fall in a dark shimmering mass to her waist. Then she laid aside her habit and loosened her soft shirt about her neck. How shapely that throat was! She was the very picture of a huntress out of an ancient fable.

"Groom or not," she went on to herself, "I can't help but like him for his courage and his strength. Even

if he is a groom, isn't it natural that a person of his class should have felt the right to be a little familiar with me, after saving my life?"

She missed her ride in the park the next day. She would not admit that it was because she did not want to risk meeting her rescuer. She told her aunt she was not feeling well, and grew snappy and querulous as the day went on. When evening came, she found herself still thinking of her adventure.

But she spoke of it to no one—not even to her cousin, Jacob Ruysdael, when he came, a day or so later, to take her to a polo game at Meadowbrook. On the way out in the car she thought of doing so, but a reticence for which she could not account restrained her.

When they arrived at the clubhouse, the game had already started. They reached their seats just in time to see the White's forward dash down the opposite side of the field, sending the ball before him with long, sure strokes. He seemed certain to score but the Blue's back reached the ball before him, and with a backhander which brought the spectators to their feet, sent it to mid-field.

"Who's that?" cried Miriam, enthusiastically.

"The one who just hit that lovely backhander? Why, that's Rodney Parker. Don't you know him? He's playing like a demon."

There was something familiar in the man's appearance, but it was not until the ball was hit outside the touch line, directly under where she sat, and the players were lined up for the throw-in, that Miriam recognized him definitely. It was her rescuer, then, that great crowd was cheering so enthusiastically—and he was no groom!

Now she began to watch him feverishly, watch him as he urged his

pony to the gallop, watch him as he came up again with the ball and sent it, with a full forward drive, towards the goal. Miriam's heart stood still as she saw him well set for his stroke.

"Will he hit? Will he miss?" she gasped, under her breath.

With a neat cross-cut the great back sent the ball trickling between the goal posts.

Again loud cheers broke out all over the field and Miriam, flushed and nervous, turned to Ruysdael.

"Who is he?" she said. "Who is Mr. Parker?"

"Rodney Parker?" said Ruysdael. "Well, he's about the gamest man alive. There's not his match as a horseman in New York, and if he only played regularly he'd be on the Big Four."

"It's funny I haven't seen him before."

"He hasn't played much this year. I guess he has too much on his mind."

"Look at him! Look at him!" said Miriam as the game began again with a furious rush by the Whites, and only a bit of daring riding by Rodney saved his side.

"He's taking his life in his hands," said Ruysdael. "There's not another man would have dared do that! Well, I guess he doesn't much care whether he breaks his neck or not."

"What do you mean?" asked Miriam, without looking at her companion. Her eyes were riveted on Parker, who every now and then dashed across the field like greased lightning.

"Well, I guess poor Parker has nearly shot his bolt," went on Ruysdael. "It doesn't do for a man to try to buck Consolidated Equipment. You're a pretty strong crowd, you know."

Miriam reddened as she heard the

name. She knew that *she* was Consolidated Equipment. Could it be true that a fight to the death was taking place between it and the man who had saved her life, the man whom that fashionable crowd was now cheering for his dare-devil riding, his superb nerve, his clean strength and accurate eye?

"What's the trouble between them?" she managed to ask Ruysdael.

"I don't know—better ask your cousin Hamlin. As president of Consol. he ought to know. I've heard on the street it is some question of patents, and that Consol. is determined to squeeze Parker out. I daresay it will mean another million or two for you, one of these days."

Miriam bit her lip, and her tall, slender frame quivered with emotion. All at once the memory of that unfortunate five-dollar gold piece she had given Parker rushed into her mind, and she felt like sinking through the ground.

There was another great burst of cheering from the crowd, and when Miriam saw that the Whites had scored, her heart sank. She gloried in a close game, but above all things now, she wanted Rodney to win, yes, win there, and win against the world. It came to her like an inspiration. His cause became her cause. What was the use of her owning Consolidated Equipment if the man who had saved her life should be crushed by it? She watched him, fascinated, ready almost to cry aloud the glory she felt in the true courage which he showed.

She was impatient for the end of the game, and at last the glad clang came which announced that the last chukker had ended, with the Blues leading by a bare half goal. Rodney had won.

III

Miriam suffered from a variety

of moods for some days after her discovery at the polo game that the hero of her adventure in the park was a man of her own class. She developed a strange repugnance for her daily rides in the park. She could not bear the idea of coming face to face with Rodney Parker again after her egregious blunder and the insult she had offered him in giving him that gold piece in pay for his heroism.

She moved restlessly about in her chair, stretching her long, slim arms before her and examining them critically under the filmy sleeves of her peignoir. She must find out exactly what the situation was that made Consolidated Equipment the deadly enemy of her polo player—no, of her groom. She did not want to have it on her conscience that she had contributed, even unknowingly, to any man's ruin—if it should be a question of ruin, as Jacob had suggested. She would make her cousin Hamlin come to see her at once—that very day—and explain the situation to her.

"I wish you'd tell me," she said at once, when he came, barely managing to extend him her customary greeting, "I wish you'd tell me exactly what is the situation between Consol. and the R. L. Parker Co."

"My dear cousin," Hamlin laughed lightly. "Why all this sudden interest in our sordid affairs? What do you know about the R. L. Parker Co.?"

His tone increased her annoyance and impatience. "Nothing at all," she replied, "but I have reasons for wanting to know."

"Perhaps it is the fascinating Mr. Parker himself," he suggested playfully. "Is he a friend of yours?"

She bit her lip in annoyance. "I've never met him," she said, hesitating for a moment over the fib. "I heard some talk about it the other day at

Meadowbrook, and I did not at all like what people were saying. So I sent for you to get the facts."

"They are very simple, if you care to know them. Parker's company has entered into a contract with ours, and has extended its plant on the strength of that contract. We considered it wise to cancel our orders to them recently, and, as a result, I believe they are in financial straits. We have no other interest in the matter at all, but they own some patents which would be valuable to us, and which we may be able to buy in very cheaply if they go smash, and so we are keeping our eyes on them pretty closely."

"Why did we cancel our orders?"

Hamlin shrugged his shoulders. "Technical details, my dear, which frankly, I haven't at my finger-tips. It is a matter of no importance to us—as I have told you. And we can be in no way responsible for Parker's over-extensions. It's a chance every business man has to take. If he guesses right, he wins. If he doesn't—" He shrugged his shoulders again expressively.

"Did we have any dissatisfaction with the quality of the work done by the Parker Co.?" she persisted.

"None whatever. It was simply a question of expediency."

"Would you mind giving me the history of the thing?" she asked.

He began his explanations, his manner suggesting a benignant acquiescence in the whim of a little girl.

"It is to our advantage, then, to have the exclusive right to his product," she said musingly when he had finished.

"Naturally," Hamlin acquiesced.

"And we have found nothing to take the place of his transformers?—nothing that is as good, or better?"

"The man has basic patents. There is nothing else on the mar-

ket, or nothing that could get on the market except on a royalty basis to the owner of the patents."

"But why," she demanded again, "why, if things are as good for us as you admit—why should we want to cancel now?"

He shrugged his shoulders again. "A matter of expediency," he repeated, "—of business policy. I don't remember the exact reasons that were alleged."

"What are we going to do in case the Parker Co. fails?"

Hamlin grinned. "Manufacture under his patents," he said. "We can buy them in, then—no one else can use them."

"I see," she said slowly, "I see."

She glanced sideways at the sleek, self-satisfied face of her cousin, and was conscious of a great loathing for him.

She questioned him as to the reasons why the Parker Co. had engaged in such extensive additions to its plants at the present time, and he admitted that it might have been—and probably was—on account of Consol.'s growing requirements. He laughed at her simplicity in imagining that this entailed any responsibility on Consol. to live up to orders which had been accepted in good faith. She spoke of the moral aspects of the case, and he laughed again—"My dear child," he said. "This is a question of business—not of morals. If a man makes a mistake in business, he must be prepared to suffer the consequences."

"Even if other people have perhaps—assisted him—to make that mistake?"

He nodded in intense enjoyment.

"I see," she said. "Tell me exactly what we are doing now."

"Standing pat, my dear, and defending the suit. That is all."

"Who decides these things?" she queried.

"Your board of directors, and your executive committee, of both of which I am the head."

"And there is no necessity for any other action?"

"None at all. The directors have already passed on the matter. As a matter of fact their action has still to be ratified by a meeting of the shareholders, but that, as you know, is a pure formality, since the directors control some ninety per cent of the stock of the company—either in person or by proxy. That is the advantage of having such a nice little close corporation as ours."

She leaned forward earnestly while he was speaking. "Did I understand you to say that without this ratification of the directors' action, the suit will not be defended?"

He laughed. "If the directors, voting as shareholders, should refuse to ratify their own actions—but, of course, that is absurd."

She smiled a little brightly. "And when do you hold this belated shareholders' meeting? I have an idea I should like to attend a shareholders' meeting, and this one will do as well as another. Will you be sure to send me the notice personally?"

He nodded, somewhat bored with her long interrogatory and took his leave. She stood for a moment or two with her brow knitted into a serious little frown of perplexity. Then she smiled suddenly, as though dismissing an unpleasant matter from her mind.

The next day, for the first time in nearly two weeks, she was in the park, her cheeks alternately blushing red at the thought of the possibility of meeting Parker, and going colorless with embarrassment over her first ridiculous mistake in regard to him. Near the reservoir they met, face to face. She blushed crimson as she nodded to him, and he raised his hat. Then her heel came

sharply against her bay mare's flank, and she cantered away.

Rodney turned and looked after her until she had disappeared around a bend.

"What rotten luck!" he muttered. "If only I were sure that blamed lawsuit would turn out all right—But while there's life, there's hope, my Prince," he went on, leaning forward and patting The Prince's glossy neck. "She's not dead. She hasn't been snatched up to Heaven to delight the angels, or anything equally hopeless so far as you and I are concerned. We may see her again tomorrow, old fellow, and men have died for less than that."

After that they saw each other nearly every day. But he did not speak to her, although her greeting to him when they passed seemed to lose something of its first constraint.

He could ill afford the time stolen for his rides in the Park, for he was personally directing every move made by his lawyers. From the first they were harassed by the dilatory tactics pursued by the opposition. Obstacles were placed in their path to prevent the matter from coming to a hearing. Delays were granted, no progress was being made, and in the meantime his plants were practically idle, while his expenses—very heavy ones—went on as before, with no end in sight.

The first hearing of the injunction proceedings was at last definitely fixed. It would be no more than the preliminary skirmish before the battle—or the campaign, rather—but it was prepared for as carefully as though it were to be the deciding factor in the suit.

IV

Miriam's arrival in the big, board room on the day of the meeting was the occasion of much excitement, her cousin having regarded her in-

terest in the matter as merely passing, and having forgotten to notify his fellow-directors of her coming. She took her seat at the end of the table, and the meeting gradually settled down to business after the unaccustomed exchange of social amenities necessitated by her presence.

It was obvious that every one regarded the meeting as mere routine. There were some half a dozen resolutions to be passed, the only one of which had any significance to Miriam being that which authorized the company's counsel to defend a suit brought against them by the R. L. Parker Co. in the matter of contract No. 4472X.

A man at the head of the table moved that the resolutions of the directors be ratified as read. Miriam rose to her feet.

"Mr. Chairman," she said. Every one looked at her in great surprise. "May I ask that the various resolutions to be acted on be taken up separately instead of—all together?" She looked about her and smiled.

The men about the table looked at each other, some with amusement, others annoyed. Many of them were anxious to get back to their regular occupations, and this proceeding would occupy time.

"It is quite unnecessary—quite unusual, with us, Miss Van Courtland," her neighbor explained to her. "We usually save time and get through our business this way." Hamlin looked at her disapprovingly from the head of the table.

"If you insist," he said, a little stiffly, "of course we shall have to take them up one at a time. You control the meeting, I believe."

She smiled at him sweetly. "If you will, please," she said, and resumed her seat.

The men settled themselves in their chairs, in attitudes of greater

or less boredom, and the secretary read the first resolution which was put to a vote and passed, Miriam voting, "aye."

And so on with the next, and the next. The one in which she was interested was the last one on the list, and some of the men had already begun to hunt around for their hats and gloves when the secretary reached it.

"I move that the resolution of the directors be ratified as read," mumbled her neighbor again, when the reading was finished, and again a man across the table seconded the motion.

"It has been moved and seconded," began Hamlin . . . The men rose from their chairs preparatory to an adjournment.

"All those in favor of the motion . . ." There was a perfunctory chorus of "ayes" from the men.

"Contrary . . ."

"No!" said Miriam, her voice sounding out above the shuffling of feet and the scraping of chair-legs. The men around her seemed suddenly to have been struck motionless, not one of them, for a moment, believing that he could have heard aright.

"My dear Miriam!" protested Hamlin almost angrily, "You don't know what you're doing!" The others, who had by this time returned to the table stood looking at her in amazement.

"It is my right as a shareholder to vote on the resolution, isn't it?" she demanded.

"Of course, but you don't understand . . . This meeting is a pure formality—action has already been taken—our counsel are already proceeding with the case—the matter is no longer in our hands—" Hamlin stumbled along confusedly in his exasperation at the unexpected turn affairs had taken.

"Perhaps if Miss Van Courtland had the matter properly explained to her—" suggested her gray-bearded neighbor.

"Thank you, Mr. Erskine," Miriam turned to him with a smile, "but I have already had it explained."

"By whom, I should like to know," demanded Hamlin, half rising from his chair.

"By the man who ought to know more about the affairs of this company than any one else. By its president." Miriam gazed straight at her cousin, who sank back helplessly into his chair, fuming and spluttering.

"If you think half an hour's conversation over a tea-table—" he began.

"It was quite long enough to convince me that there has been a mistake made somewhere."

There was a confusion of voices. "Has the secretary recorded the motion?"—"How can we go back on our undertakings?"—"Where's Erskine? Let him explain?"

Hamlin rapped for attention on the table. "Will Mr. Erskine explain the exact legal difficulties in the way of stopping these proceedings in their present stage?" he asked.

Miriam's neighbor rose to his feet, and she listened attentively to what he had to say. When he had finished she asked him a single question. "Do I understand from you, Mr. Erskine," she said, "that the abandonment of our defense against these injunction proceedings would be the abandonment of our entire case against the Parker Co.?"

He bowed to her. "Precisely, Miss Van Courtland."

"Is there any one here," she asked, "who can explain to me why it was necessary for us to cancel our contracts with the Parker Co.?"

The directors turned with one accord to Hamlin. "The president,"

said Mr. Erskine, "has had this matter in his own personal charge." Hamlin did not seem inclined to speak.

"The president has told me," said Miriam, after waiting a moment, "that it was a question of expediency—of business policy. That our relations with the Parker Co. had been satisfactory from the first—that their goods had been up to our standards—that there had been no complaint as to quality or price—that their transformers could be obtained from no one else, and that they were necessary for our installations. Am I right on these points?" She turned to Hamlin, who nodded silently.

"He also mentioned to me," she went on, "that our company was anxious to buy up Mr. Parker's patents, and that Mr. Parker had refused to sell. Is it not true,"—she turned to her cousin suddenly and her eyes flashed with excitement as she made the point. "Is it not true that our only interest in canceling our obligations—our obligations," she repeated, emphasizing the word by the inflexions of her voice—"is that we may be able to force Mr. Parker into bankruptcy, and so get control of his patents—patents that are necessary to our business—at a purely nominal cost—that this, in other words, has been a cold-blooded conspiracy to rob Mr. Parker of the fruits of his ingenuity?" Her voice rang out, clear and distinct, across the hushed room. "Is this not true?" she demanded again, turning her accusing eyes on her cousin.

"My dear Miriam," he began, "You cannot possibly understand these things."

She silenced him with a gesture. "If it is not true," she said, "will you, or any one else here, give me one valid and sufficient reason why that contract should have been canceled?"

Dead silence reigned about her. She smiled, a bit scornfully, and turned to whisper a few words in Mr. Erskine's ear. When she had finished, he looked about him in a puzzled way and rose to his feet. "In view of Miss Van Courtland's position, and the obvious impossibility of passing this resolution over her veto, it would be in order for the president to direct the company's counsel to discontinue their defense of the injunction suit now pending."

"It's too late to do that," growled Hamlin desperately. "It's on this afternoon—now."

"There's a telephone at your elbow," suggested Miriam.

Like a sulky lion cowed by the trainer's eye, Hamlin reached for the instrument.

"If there is no further business—" began some one.

"I move the meeting adjourn," from some one else, and it was over, and Miriam had won.

V

Rodney was sitting at his counsel's table in the court room when young Heatherly, the junior member of the firm that represented his opponents, came over to them and whispered in the lawyer's ear. He started back in surprise, and turned to Rodney. "Their defense is withdrawn," he said. "They want a conference with you."

Rodney's heart gave a great bound in his breast. "What's happened?" he gasped.

The lawyer shrugged his shoulders. "Looks like a miracle." Neither man could find any explanation, and young Heatherly vouchsafed none.

Two hours later, Rodney was telling The Prince all about it, and The Prince was expressing his complete satisfaction with their changed fortunes by every method in his pow-

er. "And now, old man," concluded Rodney, "if our luck only holds, and we should run across—you know who—this afternoon, we'd speak to her—we'd speak to her, though hell itself should gape and bid us cease." The Prince didn't need the touch of his heel to let himself out joyously in a long, springy canter.

Beneath the trees in a deserted part of the path they met her, and she did not avoid them. Rodney rode boldly up and stopped abreast of her, taking off his hat. "You'll pardon me," he said happily, "You must pardon me. I've simply got to speak to you to-day."

She blushed furiously and lowered her eyes for a moment under his searching gaze. "I am ashamed to speak to you," she said, "after that—that hideous—that terrible mistake—when I first met you."

"Oh that!" he laughed happily. "That was funny. I've got your gold piece still." He turned The Prince and rode with her down the path. "I've been waiting for this day," he said, "for weeks—years—all my life."

She pretended not to notice what he had said. "I have wanted to let you know," she said, "that I knew you were not—a groom."

He went on as if he had not heard her. "I've been waiting for this day," he repeated, "all my life. There have been reasons why I could not hurry it," and he told her a little something about the peril from which he had just escaped. "And now," he said, "now that that is all over—"

The Prince cocked his ears forward discreetly, and engaged in animated conversation with Miriam's bay mare. She looked like a perfect

lady, but women, even the best of them, are gossips, and The Prince had a notion it might be safer if neither of them should overhear what was coming next. The sunlight filtered through the leaves over their heads, the paths were soft and warm under their feet, and the lilt-ing of the birds' songs was in their ears. Exactly what followed for the next few minutes The Prince never did know, and being a perfect gentleman never exhibited any curiosity about it, but somehow he found himself crowding very close to the bay mare—who did not reject his advances—and then they both stopped as of one accord. There was a sound above their backs very like the order some women give to horses when they want them to move on. The Prince coughed discreetly, and stood stock still. Which after all must have been what was meant, as there was no objection from the powers above.

"And so it was love at first sight for us both, Rodney," he heard Miriam say, and then a roar came from Rodney. "But Great Scot!" he cried, "I don't even know your name!"

The girl laughed softly. "I am Miriam Van Courtland," she said.

"Miriam Van Courtland! Then you are Consolidated Equipment! And it's you that I've been fighting within an inch of my life!"

"Not I," she said laughing easily, "I am dreadfully ignorant of business matters, and never interfere with what's going on there."

"Well of all things—" exclaimed Rodney, "Isn't it quite—"

"It is," she said, "quite—" and they both laughed happily.

And The Prince understood.

WESTWARD HO! IN IRELAND

CASUAL IMPRESSIONS OF THE "MOST IRISH COAST OF ALL"—GALWAY AND ITS MEMORIES—THE CLADDAGH

By WARREN BARTON BLAKE

DUBLIN was beyond a doubt the calmest capital in Europe—yet even Dublin knew that a great war was preparing. Indeed, a grocer in a by-street busied himself with a big sheet of paper and a blue crayon—and this was the result of his labors:

OWING TO
OUR WAR WITH FRANCE
the undermentioned will be the prices until further notice: EGGS, 1½d. each; BUTTER, 1s. 6d. per pound; BACON, 1s. 3d. per pound.

It wasn't because of the war, however, or the war prices at Dublin, that I took the five o'clock express for Galway that particular Tuesday. No, I was simply carrying out my original project, and starting for the "West Coast." That is, in truth, the most Irish coast of all, and the part of the kingdom that has given most largely in picturesque of material and of speech to the new Anglo-Irish literature. I took a third-class ticket for two sufficient reasons: one sees more of the folk and nothing of fellow tourists, traveling third; also the fare is but ten shillings and nine pence.

When I was talking about my travel plans with an Irish artist, who knows his country better than anyone else I've met (except Mr. George W. Russell—A.E.—poet, painter and agricultural economist), he urged me to take in any races that might be running in the west. "Go to the race-meetings, fairs and markets," he counseled, "for there the

people of the country come to you, instead of your having to go to them." Quite by accident, I blundered upon the principal races of the season, so far as the west of Ireland is concerned. For Galway is the county seat, and the Galway Plate was to be run off the day after. I got there. There were to be two days crowded with races, and me staying at lodgings in the old city, with no one else lodging in the house but half a dozen "bookies": the politest men I ever shared a leg of mutton with. "And what will you have to drink?" asked the daughter of the house, serving us our supper after the day's racing. "Milk, please," said Dick, and Paddy had milk too; but the rest of us had tea. And after tarts and tea we discussed Austro-Hungarian politics as wisely as a set of landed gentry and Trinity College professors at the Kildare Street Club. A bookie's home life must be uncommonly sedate and orderly, if my experience at the Galway races is a criterion . . .

But I mustn't get to Galway sooner than the five o'clock express. Crowded that train was, and it only one of many pouring passengers into the ancient "Citie of the Tribes" from all parts of the kingdom, but chiefly from Dublin and Limerick and the nearer countryside. Crowded as it was, I found a seat by a keen, young agricultural student: home-bound for vacation. He found in me an eager listener to his accounts of Connemara scenery and

Connemara people—"the best in the world." Perhaps his enthusiasm was all the more outspoken because these people have, in urban Ireland, a name for being rather rough. And without my mentioning them at all, he urged me to go out to the Aran Islands, the ancient "Isles of the Saints" and, more recently, the local inspiration of Synge's unsaintly dramas. "You will find these people quite different from us other Irish," he assured me. "They speak Gaelic only, and they claim to be all that is left of the pure Firbolgs—the first Irishmen of all. The rest of Ireland has been swamped by the Milesian race, you see, or by the English." He made me promise not to fail to visit Aran—and I kept my promise.

Now, in a recent article by that brilliant Irish-American, Mr. William Marion Reedy, I find this opening sentence: "Running over to Ireland, I found that the native pronunciation of Dublin is 'Dooblin,' and I don't fancy Dublin." For my part, I do "fancy" it: but that is not the present point. It seems to me that Mr. Reedy, like most travelers, has gone to Ireland harkening for strange and unusual mispronunciations: and so, of course, has heard them. To my ears, there is much less of brogue in Ireland than is commonly supposed. To put the truth more carefully, the way most travelers, and writers of Irish fiction for outside consumption, spell words as spoken by Irishmen grossly parodies rather than represents the Irish speech: and this is as true of W. M. Thackeray as it is of W. M. Reedy. The music of Irish speech is a more subtle music than most writers know how to register. I won't deny that some jarvey called Dublin "Dooblin" to Mr. Reedy—and certainly the first syllable isn't pronounced like the substantive "dub." The rhythm and roundness of Irish conversation, in

high places and low, is one part of its charm. It counts for even more than the relative richness of the Irish vocabulary—for if there were a people with an inborn sense of how to find things to say, and how to say them crisply, here it is. And generally the big word, if it's used, is used correctly.

For the first time since I had begun my Irish wanderings I heard, in that train from Dublin to the west, Irish speaking of English that was notably like the speech the Dublin players use in their reading of what Ireland still calls "the Abbey Plays." Properly enough, the speaker was a big-boned old woman, with a frame like a man of the fields, uncommonly strong and tall. Round her shoulders she wore a big, fawn-colored shawl of the sort that is well nigh universal in County Galway, and she also wore a great white apron; but not this apron, even, could cloak the glory of her crimson petticoat. It was the first of these red petticoats that I had seen off stage; but in the wet days that were to follow I saw hardly anything else—whether worn by slim colleens on the road between villages (always two or three of them together, it seemed to me, and always seemingly too shy to give me back my greetings), or by the women driving donkey-carts laden with turf or cabbage, or the women standing outside their cabins on the Connemara hillsides, eyeing me with the curiosity which declares a stranger something of a rarity in this country. Sadness is perhaps one charm of this Irish west: a sadness of rocks and stony fields and a pretty rough climate; a sadness of poverty, natural and human, too; but everywhere this stunning color sounds a cheerful note on highway or village street, like the crimson loose-strife of the fields. The purity of color in these petticoats is threatened to-day

—for in describing Galway Mr. Stephen Gwynn, Nationalist member of Parliament from this borough but now a British officer in the trenches, tells of the “new, little woolen mill” which has started operation there, diffusing an aniline scarlet die in place of “the true rich crimson of madder.” “I told the manager,” says Mr. Gwynn, “how the ruler of Persia had quietly and simply imposed a death penalty on whatever man imported anilines or used them; but my friend contended that in modern conditions they were a necessary evil. Madder and indigo are costly.” That was written five years ago. And the Galway mill is still using its anilines . . .

I keep forgetting that I am still on that train that left Dublin at five, and was due to reach Galway at nine-five in the evening. And I believe it was a raw-boned woman of fifty-odd that I was looking at there; a tall woman in shawl and apron. Her face was small for the size of her body, and framed in decent, white hair; she wore small, gold earrings, and her forehead showed a great scar. The face was fairly kindly, however weatherbeaten, and she alternated between three bottles. One bottle was black, and held porter; one bottle was white, and held whisky; and one bottle was green, and held milk.

At the stations along the line entered other passengers—more than there was room to seat; and fifty of them, at least, were Royal Irish Constabulary—well set-up men, tanned by sun and wind. Thackeray in 1842 could think of nothing finer than “the trim, orderly and soldier-like appearance of this splendid corps”—and what they were they are still. Some of those in this train were veterans of the Boer War—but generally young, too; and in their trig, dark uniforms, their close-

cropped moustaches, their general air of readiness and competence, they make our American police (save only the State Constabulary of Pennsylvania) seem slouchy indeed. A lot of them sat within sight or reach or earshot of the Red Petticoat. And she soon let loose.

It was they she blamed for the murder of boys and women in Bachelor's Walk, after the Howth gun-running; she put them and the guilty Scottish Borderers all in one parcel. (An injustice, this, for the only police even remotely involved were Dublin's Metropolitan Force.) But the old woman didn't meticulously bother with history's minutiae. She poured bitter abuse upon these men in uniform—for weren't they the only men in uniform in sight?—and the constables took her abuse with perfect coolness and good nature. Some laughed, and some made wry mouths and laughed with their eyes alone, and others looked straight before them: good soldiers, paid (like servants) not to think in public. But the one sitting next her was a fat old boy with a Rabelaisian cast of features (an impression strengthened by his moustachios which were upturned in the Gallic style)—and this worthy, wearing three stripes on his sleeve, took it on himself to parry and fence with her. She, I must say, had the best of him in the duel of words. Pulling at her shawl and feeling at her apron. “I bought these,” she announced. “I earned the money that paid for them, and bought them for myself. See this old green hat—I worked for it, and paid good money for it—yes, I myself. That's more than you can say for that helmet of yours. It's me and the likes of me that keeps you and houses you and feeds you and pays for the clothes on your back—you who never did a day's job in your life!” The con-

stables chuckled or snorted outright. And it is to the credit of Old Moustaches that then, and whenever she did prick him, he laughed harder than anyone else. Once she used foul language. But at another time she gave him the white bottle with the whisky in it, and administered a very long drink indeed. He took the drink as cheerfully as he took her abuse: which is more than you or I could have done, very like. Lest you suspect me of wronging County Galway by telling of a citizeness who drank porter and whisky and milk, all three, on a four-hour journey by common carrier, I hasten to add that of the two fellow-countrywomen sitting nearby, both wrapped in fawn shawls like her own, and both enveloped in petticoats stained with crimson madder, neither one opened her head or showed the slightest militancy. And this is one place to state (for it can't be stated too often) that Irish women in general seem to the traveling Yankee rich in their womanliness, their charm, their natural modesty. I am thinking of the younger women, you may say. Surely the younger women are the ones that best feed imagination. And the young women of the west are the fairest of them all (figuratively speaking—since many of them are dark). Though they age with a cruel rapidity, their flowering time is a joy indeed.

The morning after I reached Galway, "Citie of the Tribes" (and the Blakes one of them), I saw the old woman who had been mildly drunk on the train; and from the side-car, on which I drove out to the race-track at Ballyrit with a damsel from Limerick, I saw two* constable-friends of the same railway-journey: one of them the dame's Rabelaisian enemy in her duel of talk. Old Moustaches saluted me most merrily—but the Amazon knew me not. It

was in the Claddagh that I encountered her—and saw her no more.

The Claddagh is, to the traveler from Dublin to the West, the first surprise. There is nothing even mildly startling on the railway journey. The afternoon of my own journeying, troops guarded every bridge, station and junction—troops, that is, or R. I. C's., for the authorities were taking no chances with the Germans. But even in war time the trip through that flat region is not enlivening: no, not even when the next day began the Galway races, and all the constables not otherwise engaged were being shipped thither to police racetrack and *banlieux* and highways. This railway from Dublin to Galway is one hundred and twenty-six and one-half miles long; it cuts Ireland into northern and southern halves; it dates from 'Fifty-two. There you have the guide-book data; but there is nothing thrilling to be noted from your car, either at Castleknock, four and a half miles out, and one mile to your left ("occupying the summit of Knockmaroon Hill") where Cornhal, father of the celebrated Finn, was slain in a great battle, nor yet at Leixlip, (eleven miles), nearest railway station to Celbridge, home of Swift's Vanessa; nor Maynooth (fifteen miles) with castle and college; nor Mullingar (fifty miles) a military town; nor Athlone; nor even at Athenry. Of course, these places may be interesting enough in themselves; they simply don't say so to you when you hurry by them. "The best capital Scotland has are Bobby Burns, Walter Scott, Tammas Carlyle and Robert Louis Stevenson," says W. M. Reedy. For my part, I am thankful, indeed, that Scott happened to be born in his own country, and not over here in Ireland. He would have "celebrated" every battlefield and monastery, every ruin and black

bog, in all the kingdom; travelers would teem throughout Ireland as they already teem in the Killarney district—and all Ireland would be reduced to the stupidity thereof. For Ireland is richer in subjects for versified guide-books than Scott's Scotland, and Ireland is no less rich in ladies than in lakes. Grace O'Malley, for instance—though I like her better by her name Granuaile. Did she marry twice, or thrice? Was she jailed three times or four? You see, Ireland has no Scott who has committed her misadventures to verse that every schoolboy knows. Sir Henry Sidney wrote of her in 1576 as "a most famous, feminine sea-captain," and well he might, since she offered him her services and those of "three galleys and two hundred fighting men, either in Ireland or in Scotland." If my memory is dependable, she paid Elizabeth a visit, too. But I am glad no Irish Scott ever immortalized her. It is better to see a country with one's own eyes, even if they are none of the best, rather than through some second-rate bard's. Instead of patronizing literature, I prefer to walk the streets of Galway and hunt up lodgings; to visit the store of the Shop Street jeweler who sells photographs; or buy the latest newspapers and re-read that edifying phrase in the war-news: "Deleted by the Censor." It is being overworked these days as badly as Henry James's "wonderful."

A traveler of eighty years ago says of Galway: "At every second step I saw something to recall Spain to my recollection—the wide entries and broad stairs of Cadiz and Malaga; the arched gateways, with the outer and the inner railing, and the court within . . . the sculptured gateways and grotesque architecture—even the little sliding wicket." But

those relics of brave days are no more; only nunneries thrive in this shrunken capital of the west that once traded with all the world and rang with the wit and oaths and commerce of French and Spanish captains. The most Spanish thing I have seen in the west of Ireland to-day (and naturally one sees least of it in Galway) is something Spanish, or purely Oriental, in the use these women make of their big brown shawls. With their shawls over their heads, they veil themselves at times to the very eyes, and this especially in moments of embarrassment. Nothing of architecture to suggest Old Spain did I find in Spanish Galway save "Lynch's Castle," with its sculptured monkeys; the ancient house where Mrs. Kerwin (of a tribal family) still lives in dusty grandeur. Mrs. Kerwin is said to have made a great deal of money manufacturing soap, but she must surely have marketed her product elsewhere than here in Galway. The attendant who showed me house, court, roof and all (the roof commands a wonderful view of the old city) seemed genuinely glad of a chance to talk with someone. "I am from Dublin, but see few people here," she said. "Only the doctor and the clergy, besides the servants." Not a lively program! But those who dwell in Lynch's Castle have the tradition of James Lynch Fitz Stephen to fall back upon in moments of depression—the Lynch who hanged his own son from one of the Castle windows because no one else would hang him, after he had, in jealousy, stabbed a Spanish guest-friend—a foreign merchant who was, in effect, Galway's Spanish consul. Time was when these streets were trodden by men in silk and men in mail; when the City Council was so shocked by the lavishness of Galway blades as to ordain "that no

young man, prentiz or otherwise, shall weare ne gorgious apparel, ne silks, either within or without ther garments, ne yet fyne knit stockings either of silke or other costlie wise." Nor were they to wear "pantwofles" (*pantoufles*) "but be content with showse." Time was when scholars like Roderic O'Flaherty consorted here, and there were five hundred of them gathered in a single school; but the railway has not brought prosperity to Galway. Even so late as 1830 the population was three times what it is to-day—13,000; but immigration to America has drained the city sadly, and even before the tide turned westward the days of rich "pantwofles" and the need of legislation against too luxurious dress had quite passed by. No more is the bay crowded with shipping, and time alone can tell whether the old project of a transatlantic line of steamers connecting Galway and New York is ever to be realized. Once, some sixty years since, it came near to being a fact, indeed, and a stately ship made its maiden sailing. "But rival interests bought up the pilots," and old seamen told me in Galway Bay: "they ran their ship on the rocks, and she was lost before she had even cleared the bay. One of the pilots perished in prison; the other escaped at last to America, and lived and died there under a false name." I don't vouch for the accuracy of this history—but a line was started, and one of the ships of it burned on the American side, while the other went on the rocks much as my seaman told me. A curse has lain on Galway's great ambition.

Galway was once a walled town, but the Claddagh lies without the north gate. Is this the gate, I wonder, over which a stone was once set with the inscription:

"From the fury of the O'Flaherties, good Lord, deliver us!"

For the O'Flaherties, who terrorized the Atlantic seaboard and perched like eagles on the western mountain peaks and the rocky islands in the sea, had as chieftain one Murrough, whose castle stood at Bunown; and Murrough O'Flaherty (being the Hohenzollern of those times) was wont to mount a high hill and to declare war inclusively and yet discriminatingly against "all the potentates of the world, but especially against that pitiful, pettifogging town of Galway." Commercial Galway, was, you see, an English town to begin with, with some Welsh in it, and it had a great scorn for the "native Irish." To-day it is more Irish than Cork itself.

But the Claddagh is notable in one way: it furnishes the west-bound traveler his first surprise. This fishing village, just across the River Corrib from Galway itself, is only technically a part of the larger city. There is nothing uncommon in this arrangement by which an Irish town lies just outside the walls of an English or Anglo-Irish city: it is frequent enough through the kingdom. What is really striking is the utter isolation of the Claddagh from the community it fringes so closely. Formerly the Claddagh fishermen had their own "king" (or mayor) and their own laws. Their own traditions and usages they still maintain. Here the Irishtown has remained as Irish as on its first birthday, and as Irish-speaking. Nor does the Gaelic Leaguer find the Claddagh responsive to his own enthusiasm. "We've always had Irish in Claddagh," one fishwife told Mr. Stephen Gwynn, Nationalist member of Parliament, on one of his electioneering visits: "and what has Irish done for us?" Certainly the language has 'done nothing for the community in a material sense.

Picturesque it surely is—this hud-

dle of thatched huts. "Once," records Mr. Gwynn, "there were streets"; but new houses have been built everywhere and anyhow. Today, one man's back door opens into his neighbor's front entrance—but no one much cares, and a stranger would find it hard to tell front door from back. And no one could well be poorer or dirtier than the Claddagh people. They are dark skinned—but were they so to begin with? Some say that their complexions are Spanish; some call the Claddagh people pure Firbolg, like the men of Aran. If the latter are right, perhaps one should be doubly thankful for the Milesian strain that has modified the Irish stock.

The Claddagh houses a people apart—but in the West of Ireland, generally, what strikes the American visitor most of all is the nearness to America. When I visited the Aran Islands, that lie just west of Galway, on the way a bird would fly for these States, I was hailed, time and again, by men who explained that they had spent ten years, or it might be twenty years, in Boston or in Woburn. There are said to be more Aran Islanders in Massachusetts than in the Isles themselves.

"Reading and writing," says one of their native historians, "is for Connemara mainly a means of communicating with America." The mails which are collected at the little post offices of the West are mails for America; and the mails that return contain postal money orders to

eke out the old people's rent-money. It is a strange sense of remoteness and of kinship that comes over one visiting these parts—but the visit is well worth undertaking. It is best worth while if one confines oneself, in traveling, to walking and side-car jaunting. Stephen Graham, in one of his tramping books, sings the joy of the walker's road—joys that people who travel by wheel never taste. "At least, I never met a wheel person who had seen on either side of the road what the tramp sees"—he writes; and he may be right. But of all wheeled travel, travel by side-car is the least limited; one sees, not what is ahead only, but what is behind; one sweeps the roadside with eyes that can see as far as any tramp's. One shifts one's position as often as he likes; sits adventurously upright clinging to the swinging two-wheeled car with toes and shoulder-blades, or reclines comfortably on the back-cushion; yes, or even leans on his elbow if he likes, as luxurious as the poet Gray on his sofa, reading an eternity of new romances by Marivaux and Crébillon *filis*. "The wheel is the great enemy of Nature—whether it be the wheel of a machine, or of a vehicle," says Mr. Graham; but if he will only come to Ireland I vow he will make a special exception in favor of the side-car.

There are only two wheels on a side-car, anyway, you know; and in the West of Ireland that's the way to journey. It is, to be sure, the way we'll travel out of Galway.



Apprenticeship

by
Josephine A. Meyer
Author of "We of the World"

LUDWIG von Beethoven Bernstein lived among his school associates in strict incognito, as Louis B. Bernstein. To these his weary hours of practicing at home were evinced merely in an ability, unequaled throughout the school by any other, to dash out marches for assembly—marches that ranged impartially from the classic to the classy.

One winter day, a few weeks before his graduation, Louis' teacher detained him after dismissal. Louis was not more than usually surprised nor less than usually hopeful. He had learned by this time that teachers are never so human and friendly as when they keep you in to lecture you upon some exuberant sin which you can explain away with a grin and a promise. Louis did not know this was his own particular advantage, due chiefly to his merry, sparkling dark eyes, the eyes which, deprived for a moment of their joyous glint, became somber as night and ages old. So, as his companions filed past him where he sat, Louis robbed his isolation of embarrassment by waving a surreptitious hand to his pals and arousing suppressed giggles along the line by screwing his face into grotesque caricatures expressive of every possible emotion from convicted guilt to persecuted virtue.

But when the teacher re-entered the emptied room, Louis saw by his smile that a reprimand of any sort was far from his thoughts.

"Bernstein," he said, "how would you like to play a piece for us on graduation day?"

"Fine, sir," Louis reddened and gulped.

"Well, come outside and let's hear your repertoire."

The music director, two heads of department, and several upper grade teachers of both sexes leaned over the cracked and worn rubber piano-cover, suggesting favorite compositions, commenting, enthusing and completely turning Louis' handsome little head. Louis' technic was never openly admired at home.

Into this group came Mr. Baker, the principal, himself, hatted, overcoated and looking very much like any ordinary person you meet on the street. He had a long folded paper in his gloved hand.

"This is Bernstein, eh?" he said genially. He opened the paper and glanced at the top. "Are you any relation to the other Bernstein?"

"No, sir."

"There's a Louis and a Max—you're Max?"

"No, sir," stammered Louis feeling as though he were contradicting a deity. "I'm—I'm Louis."

Mr. Baker stared at him for some time and then looked again at the paper he held. Louis felt his heart begin to thump guiltily. A teacher's leniency is one thing—but suppose the principal began to find out things . . .

"I've got here," said Mr. Baker slowly, to the teachers, "a list of the

boys who passed their high school entrance exams. It has just come so I have barely had time to look it over. However, I find that the highest percentage in the city has been obtained by one of our boys."

There was a little murmur of surprise and delight. The two graduation-class teachers looked conscious and then with a nervous laugh, shook hands. Louis smiled in relief. After all, Mr. Baker was not going to get personal.

"Who is it?—Can you tell us, sir? Is it Crothers—in Benson's class?" demanded Louis' teacher, voicing a dread.

"No," the eyes of the principal fell full upon Louis. "No. If this is Louis B. Bernstein of 8B2, this is the honored person."

Louis grew white. He felt his teacher hold him very close so he did not slip off the piano stool. In an indistinct way he heard the exclamations of those around. Then he was on his feet shaking hands with Mr. Baker . . .

He took the six blocks that lay between school and home at high speed and then almost floated up the five flights of lumpy, carpeted stairs that led to his apartment. He scarcely noticed that he was winded till Mary, opening the door for him, remarked on it with all the privileged irritation of a faithful servant.

"Loodwig, look at you ringin' my bell and out o' breath like a wild Indian!—What's come—"

"Papa in?" interrupted Louis hugging her.

"Go long with ye! Me hands is all over flour! He's in the front. And what's—"

But Louis had tramped down the long, narrow twilight of the hall and found his father standing before the music cabinet in the parlor, a dreary, untidy, mistressless little room. His father was glancing through some

manuscript sheets of music with an inexplicable look of triumph. Louis was seized with the idea that his father had heard already.

"Hullo, papa," he rubbed a kiss lightly on the lean, brown cheek and stood a bit shyly, uncertain how to tell his news. His father's dark eyes peered at him over the rim of their glasses. They expressed an expectancy that somehow froze Louis to silence.

"Did anyone tell you?" he blurted out, at last.

"Tell me?" There was startled inquiry in his father's gaze, now—"Tell me?—"

"About school?"

"School, hey? What about school?" his father devoted himself to the rather clumsy sorting of his music sheets.

Louis hesitated and with supreme effort bit back the more important news.

"They want me to play for graduation day exercises," he said.

"An honor!" shrugged his father scathingly.

"It is a big honor," assured Louis, reddening. "I'm the only one on the program outside of the regular necessary stuff—the—the valedictory and all that. It's a big honor."

"Sure!" his father snapped a little grin at him and transferred his closer attention to a sheet of music in his hand, muttering vaguely, "Twenty-one—twenty-two. Let's see—" Deep in these more important matters, he tossed Louis a half interested question. "What do they let you play for them for an honor, huh?"

"I played the Rachmaninoff Prelude," Louis smiled, "and they think it's too 'heavy.' It'll be the E flat Nocturne, I guess. They asked for Chaminade."

"Why don't you play for them 'Narcissus,' huh? Or 'The Glow

Worm'?" came the sarcastic inquiry. "Such they like. I play them every night with rag-time at the movies. I know."

"They like tunes," Louis wondered how they had drifted so far from the point.

"Perhaps you have the chance to play for somebody what don't like tunes," hinted his father, and for the first time, Louis became aware that his father had something of great moment to impart, himself.

"Who?" he asked, uncertainly.

"Well—how would you like to play for Lewandowsky, huh?"

"Lewandowsky!" breathed Louis, "Issa Lewandowsky?" he flushed with embarrassment even as he suggested this impossible thing.

"Ha! You can play Rachmaninoff for him."

Louis was giddy with the rain of honors that had descended upon his head this day.

"Lewandowsky — when—h o w—how did you get to see him?"

"Goldberg, he's very close with him. I was by Goldbergs' this morning and he was there. A fine man, Ludwig. None of these little boys you see in concerts nowadays. And so friendly! He talks with me like I talk with you, now, huh? Goldberg tells him I write music, but I tell him you play. Ach, you should have Lewandowsky behind you, once, *mein sohn!* Then you are made. That my poor father had given me such a chance. Believe me, I should not now be playing in the moving-picture theater!"

A little chill crept over Louis. His great surprise had been forestalled by news which instinct told him his father considered greatest of all. Playing before Lewandowsky was a privilege mixed with the deepest pain. He knew and dreaded what it was likely to mean. For often, in the creeping twilight of an afternoon

spent before the piano, wet-eyed and dogged under his father's tyrannical instruction, the older man had been wont to hurl music sheets to the floor and, stamping with passion, overwhelm his son with a warning: "So! You think you practice! *Wait!*"

Louis had been well trained to accept his destiny. Besides, that "wait" had designated an indefinite future when the boy would have grown up. But now? Was he to be robbed of the supreme triumph of youth by so imminent a maturity?

"When am I to play for him?" he asked colorlessly.

"I should know!" his tone inflamed his father with sudden anger. "You got to be ready! Practice!—Practice! Practice!" He calmed himself with an effort. "When he should tell you, we go to Europe. There is no music here."

Europe! The chill deepened. A thick silence fell between father and son. Then Louis felt the need of a question, and explanation. After all his father did not know . . .

"Papa—I'll be on the school program twice," he hinted.

"Huh? Oh, school! Ain't you got time for Lewandowsky since you got to play pieces for school?" There was a sardonic note in the man's voice.

"It's—it's not music," quavered Louis, "I'll—I'll be the valedictorian."

"How?"

"I'll—I'll make the good-bye speech for the class, and—and all that. It's—well, you must be highest for that. Mr. Baker says—he got the returns to-day—I—I have the best mark in the city on the high-school entrance exams."

His father had straightened up and removed his glasses altogether. There was a dim red flush on his cheek.

"Who told you to take examina-

tions for high-school, huh?" he demanded in a heavy voice.

"All the boys do," Louis grew a little confused. "I—we have to, to graduate."

"Oh," his father nodded, "oh, that's different. You don't have to go then?"

"You—I—I'm not going?" whispered Louis and tried to cough away an unexpected huskiness.

His father wheeled around upon him.

"Going?" he repeated, "You want to go to high school? Sure, you can go! Sure! Sure! We tell Lewandowsky we got other things to do besides music. We tell him you go to high school and learn a good business. Clothing, huh? Like Ben Lewis' boy—go on the road and peddle clothes. That's a good business. Ben Lewis' boy he went through college, too, up here on a Hundred Thirty-eighth Street. He went for four years and now he does a fine business. We'll tell Lewandowsky that. What for a business is music, anyhow, huh? *Yow!* Music!"

"But Mr. Baker—"

"Sure!—Mr. Baker—he knows all about it, sure! Music ain't nothing!" Louis heard his father draw a deep rasping breath. "Fool!" he blazed with sudden fury, "Idiot!" His hands shot out suddenly and Louis grew giddy under the sounding blows, one on either ear. "You will do what I want you to do," his father panted wrathfully. "You are my son, you hear? You are not Mr. Baker's son! Highest marks! What is marks! Sure, you can learn your lessons perfect. You ain't deaf! You ain't stupid. Marks! And you have this chance, this opportunity! *Ach, Gott!*—what I would have given up for this chance! *Dumkopf!* It's *Lewandowsky*, I tell you, what's going to listen to you—A-a-ah!—Such—such—foolishness!"

His hand came down upon the music cabinet with a rattling thud that knocked the door off the metronome and set it ticking and scattered music manuscript around the room. Mechanically Louis picked these up and calmed the metronome—mechanically and in silence.

Mary appeared at the door with a tray of coffee and German cakes which her long-practiced Irish hands made so skilfully. Louis helped her arrange a space on the littered center table, to set this down. Then the fragrant smell of this little meal choked him. He became aware of a sickening lump in his throat which he recognized with terror as a sob. He must not let his father see! . . . He brushed by the stricken-faced Mary and strode down the hall to the little shaft-lit room that was his own. He threw himself on the bed face-downward, but the desire to cry was gone. He was filled with a bitterness beyond tears.

Till now, he had never doubted that love lay behind all his father's tyranny. Even when he had grown to see that his father's rights had certain unobserved limitations, he had borne the transgressions cheerfully for the sake of that love. But now he felt that his eyes were opened.

"He loves me, sure," he whispered to himself bitterly. "The way he loves his fool symphony. He thinks I can bring him fame some day. He couldn't get it for himself so he wants me to! If I had my hands cut off he'd soon disown me." Louis' self-pity surged into a new feeling. He hated his father! He was shocked and thrilled at the thought. The generations of his race rose and damned him for blasphemy.

"Ludwig!—Ludwig!" called his father's impatient voice, "Stop that sulking and come in and have your coffee. And let me hear you prac-

tice that new Chopin I give you."

Louis rose from the bed and went, because it was easier to obey. But he had the slave's recompense of hate . . .

The next day when Mr. Baker, in a glow demanded how Louis' father had taken the wonderful news, Louis, with tears in his heart, lied colossally.

It was several days before he could trust his voice to keep steady while he informed the school people that he was not going to high school.

"Why, Bernstein! That's ridiculous! It's wicked! A boy with a head like yours. You want to, don't you?" exclaimed his teacher.

"There's—there's my music," Louis kept his head turned away.

"Music! You've got plenty of time for that afterward! Why, you're only a child!" But the next moment the teacher regretted this. The tragedy in the dark eyes now raised to him was unbearable confirmation of Louis' quiet answer:

"No—I'm—I've got to be grown up, now."

The remainder of his school life was like that of a man whose days are sweetened and uplifted by the certainty of an early death. His comrades and teachers treated him with almost reverent tenderness. He would not have been a normal boy if he had not, unconsciously but heartily, enjoyed all this misery. Above all, he looked forward to Graduation Day, *his* day supremely, with his distinctive piano selection and his valedictory. It was to be a valedictory unequalled in the past, his heartrending farewell to his youth. In his mind's eye he could not rehearse the reading of it without tears. He dreaded, yet hugged to his heart, the advent of the reality.

It is almost impossible for the average adult (so many years older than thirteen!) to understand the sacred finality of anything so shabby

and incidental as a public school graduation day, yet to those most intimately concerned it is a coronation. To Louis it was his royal obsequy.

Louis was practicing with sullen diligence three days before graduation, when his father came in.

"Ludwig," he announced. "I made that date for Lewandowsky."

Louis' hands dropped leadenly upon the keys. The light in his father's eyes seemed almost fiendish.

"When?" demanded Louis dully.

"Friday—Friday morning. You only got three days to practice."

"Friday?" Louis turned slowly on the piano stool. His mouth quivered with a strange desire to laugh—to *laugh*! "Did you make that date or did he?"

"Ach, Stupid! What matter is it? I made it. Ain't you ready by then?"

The trembling left Louis' lips. He was thankful for that. But he felt himself breathing heavily.

"It's graduation day," he said.

"Graduation?" his father stared at him blankly. From the look in his eyes Louis half expected an apology or a retraction. "Well—it can't be helped . . ." he shrugged his shoulders. "Graduation!" he repeated, his voice all at once shrill with intolerance. "*This* is Lewandowsky—*Lewandowsky!*"

Without another word Louis turned back to his work at the piano.

So a substitute read the pathetic valedictory and Louis played his piano selection (not the E Flat Nocturne!) on keys familiar to the magic touch of the great Lewandowsky, himself. All his stunted childhood, filled with weary hours of practice and his father's unrelenting ambition went to the pressing of those keys conscientiously. Every note was correct . . .

But Louis was really with his graduating class, reading his valedictory.

He knew before Lewandowsky spoke; he knew by the odd, feeble look on his father's gray face.

"Your son plays well," said Lewandowsky, gently. "You have done all that you could for him."

"But—he—"

Lewandowsky raised his bristling eyebrows almost in protest.

"He's done all he can, too."

They went all the way home together without exchanging a single word. People in the street car wondered what tragic loss had come to both of them that bleak January day.

When they reached the little parlor of the apartment, Louis stood awkwardly by the window for a few moments, gazing unseeingly down into the street. He felt his father go to the music cabinet and take from it the manuscript of the twenty-third transcription of the Bernstein First Symphony. He watched his father carry this to the table, draw up a chair and pull out a fountain pen. He was sorry—deeply, unspeakably sorry. He pitied his father far more than he had pitied himself at his worst . . . He waited, watching for some movement, some little sign that the older man understood. Such is the optimistic egotism of youth. But there was no such sign. Then a sort of daring resentment swept over Louis.

"High school begins Monday," he said in a harsh, scared voice, "I s'pose I can go?"

His father raised his eyes. Louis saw him steady his lips with his teeth before he replied.

"I don't give a damn what you do, now," he said.

So Louis was set free.

He could hardly realize the full extent of his liberty at first. He went to high school; he was not troubled by that continuous cry of his father's to "practice, practice,

practice!" He dropped away from the piano in the excitement of mastering new subjects of study and in the making of new friends—a wide and gallant circle, it seemed to Louis, with the wit and *savoir faire* of full-fledged college students. He was inflamed with a new desire—to be a high-school hero, a leader among his fellows, some day to wear the school letter on his chest and be known among his mates by some loving diminutive of his name, even as Rodge Cutter, the football star, was known.

His father did not know of this slump in the tenor of his ambitions. They scarcely spoke together during the rare minutes at meal times when they met. Louis at first wondered at his father's polite indifference, then he accepted it readily, thoughtlessly, in the manner of boys. One day with unconscious cruelty, he experimented with the forbidden rag-time on the home piano. His father sat through it in unflinching silence and Louis, with scarcely a qualm, took this as a token that the break between them was final.

One day Louis and several other boys were waiting in the gymnasium for an instructor who was to give them some special work after hours. There was a badgered and tuneless piano on the platform and, after a moment of circling around this, Louis approached it, drawn by the same magnetism that sends the turfman to the horse and the engineer to the broken-down motor-car in the street. Louis strummed a scale and then plucked at the opening notes of Chopin's Opus 53. A shock ran down his spine when he realized that the condition of the piano was not entirely to blame for the discord that followed. But the stirring notes had attracted and delighted the less critical ears around him.

"Gee!" gasped a freckled boy with

glasses, "you can play some, can't you?"

"Sure."

"Rag time?" queried an eager chorus.

For answer Louis dashed into it.

"No," shouted the freckled boy above the pulsing racket, "I like the other junk—Chopin and all that. If I could play like you I'd be a musician."

"Yes, you would not," retorted Louis feelingly.

"Did you ever hear Lewandowsky?"

"Sure," Louis grinned. "And he heard me once, too. Says I'm punk."

"No!—Why?"

"Dunno. Just am."

"Funny! I'd never notice it. Is it because you can only play one piece—or anything like that?"

Louis laughed.

"Come round to my place some time and I'll show you," he said.

"Geel! That'll be swell."

Naturally this invitation was never accepted. The freckled boy was satisfied to have Louis play over on the school piano those pieces he had heard at concerts. At first Louis was willing enough to play them in a slovenly manner, suggesting themes by ear, ruthlessly improvising the bass and covering all evil-doing with brazen dash and style. But soon he tired of this shallow show. He commenced to practice at home at odd moments, limbering up his fingers with page after page of Bach, memorizing all he had once known and forgotten. Then a curious thing happened. He began to discover undreamed of beauties in the old pieces he had played all his life; strange emotions flooded him at certain combinations of notes; he thrilled inexplicably to the sweep of familiar rhythms which had never stirred him before . . .

It was Mary's fault his father

knew nothing of all this. She came upon him in the midst of a struggle with a difficult étude.

"Oh," she breathed, star-eyed. "It's your papa'll be glad when he hears ye practicin' again!"

Louis' obstinacy, which he called pride, rose within him and he demanded secrecy. There was a strange reversal of the old order. Louis would study now till his father went out to his work at the motion picture theater; he would practice when his father was safely beyond ear shot.

So the days went on and spring came, and one Saturday early in May Louis joined the freckled boy and one or two others in a day-long tramp on the Palisades. Dogwood and the fine green of young leaves hung like jewels across the dark-faced rocks; the river ran sapphire and sparkling to the bay. The soft wind was full of the illusively fragrant smell of damp earth and little spring flowers.

At first the boys went wood-mad, scrambling, shouting, racing and jumping. But physical weariness and the growing beauty of the world as the day drew on, gradually quieted them almost to oppression.

It was twilight when Louis at last got home and his supper was waiting for him, lonesomely on the table.

"He went to the pictures early to-night," commented Louis to Mary as she brought in his coffee.

"It's not the pictures he's at to-night," answered Mary. "He's gone to see somebody about that Symphony of his, he's always at, those days. It's that fella—what's this his name is? You played for him yourself once."

"Lewandowsky?"

"That's the very name of him."

So his father had another appointment with Lewandowsky and had told his son nothing about it! Louis

suddenly sat appalled at the way they had drifted apart. Now he recalled vaguely that his father had seemed to go at the re-writing of the Symphony with more than usual excitement and ardor. An incomprehensible jealousy swept over Louis . . .

"Perhaps," he began, but Mary's eager attention somehow silenced him. In his heart he continued to wonder. If now, when music had changed—when he had changed—if he could see Lewandowsky, again, ask his advice, get a little help, a little understanding of things he had never even noticed in his work before—

After supper he pawed listlessly at the music in the cabinet. He hauled out a battered green book of the Beethoven sonatas and placed it on the music-rack of the piano and sat abstractedly turning the limp, soiled leaves. All through there were little notes scored in pencil—his father's notes of warning, advice and often exasperation. "Not a funeral march!" was written over one allegro passage; "Don't drop!" at another, or a chord was lassoed and ended in a burst of exclamation points on the margin, a hint that he always hit it wrong. Louis sat staring at the marks and became aware of a great loneliness. His own obstinacy and pride had cast away all this help. The practicing he had been doing lately now seemed to him like a hopeless, unguided stumbling through devious blind alleys leading nowhere.

He stayed his hand at the first page of the *Appassionata*. He had once heard Lewandowsky play this. At one time he had played it himself, had known it all by heart. That was last year when he was a child of thirteen. What a child a school-boy of thirteen seems to the high school student of fourteen!

His fingers half consciously drew

out the notes of the theme of the first movement and he felt his hair rise and his back tingle as though he had been given an electric shock. He forgot Lewandowsky, he forgot his father. He was standing again on the high rust-colored rocks of the Palisades. Before him was a deep cleft and out of it rose a slender, irregular, natural pillar of stone. Beyond ran the river, and above towered the wind-beaten trees . . . He felt again the thrill that ends with the clutch of tears as he stood in the presence of pure beauty, stark, crushing.

He stumbled through the half-forgotten notes, then his fingers warmed to their task and the practice of early days came back to aid the more adequate practice of these later weeks. He played breathlessly through intricate chords, broken snatches, suggestions grandly defeated, seeking again, as one seeks the return of some lofty emotion, the coming back of the overwhelming theme . . .

At first he could not believe those were his father's eyes he saw in the gloom of the lamp-lit room, eyes that seemed to suffer beyond the power to endure. He rose uncertainly. His voice was choked but within him there was a yearning that must be voiced—and he knew those eyes would understand.

"Papa," he gasped, "Please—please—don't you see? I want to—now. I want to—I want to—"

His father's hands clutched his shoulders. He heard the old man's breath coming in sobs. Then his chin was lifted firmly by the hand of one he had not seen before, and in the underglow from the lamp on the piano he beheld Lewandowsky's big, kind face.

"So?" said Lewandowsky in a deep, quiet voice, "So? Why don't you play for me like this, that day?"

He looked at the great man, abashed, unable to find words. Then he felt his father's arm wind more closely about him; where his cheek lay against his father's cheek, he felt the trickling wet of tears, and like the voice of a stranger, he

heard the husky whisper above his ear:

"He done it all by himself, Lewandowsky! I nearly killed it all—*Ach, Chommer* that I was!—I would have killed it in him! But he done it!—He done it all by himself!"

ONE RICH YOUNG MAN

BY NEWTON A. FUESSLE

AT the eleventh hour, Burnival abandoned his determination to commit suicide as a trifle too messy a measure. He resolved upon expatriation instead, to obtain relief from his desolation. If that did not avail, he reflected, he might still employ a six-shooter, a deep-sea plunge, or cyanide.

After Burnival's graduation (with-out *laude*) from college, his father had secured him an apprenticeship with a firm of New York bankers, under whose gilded wing the parent believed, the son might eventually gain a coveted place in that circle which is supposed to be able to cause a national panic at will. The firm's sheltering wing, however, fluttered vainly, so far as the inspiring of young Burnival to a winged victory in the financial world was concerned. Throughout his office hours his spirit remained aloof and afar: to wit, upon the Rialto. The Rialto has twisted many a parental plan out of all semblance to its original design. But the story of Burnival is neither that of how, to the horror of the folks at home, he became an actor, nor of how he filled the angelic function of transforming a "broiler" into a head-liner. Hence it is worth the telling.

To-night, for the last time, Burni-

val set forth from his club for the café just off Broadway which for a twelve-month had seen him so often. He entered with a heavy heart. The hour was six. Not for another five hours would the place bloom into the fullness of its color and tang. At six its tones were drab, with its chev-iots and worsteds, business conversation and Kulmbacher, English mut-ton chops and the masculine gender. At eleven all was different. The blue, lambent flame swayed to and fro beneath the dainty chafing dish. Champagne shot its effervescent arrows up into eager faces. There were shimmering voiles and petulant pearls. At eleven the hands of the clock smote the touchstone, bringing romance and wastrels.

It was here that Burnival had first laid wondering eyes upon Janet Tankerville. He was seated with a broker's clerk, a young blade whose remittances from home enabled him to squander a fortnight's pay in a night. The latter was quick to observe whither his companion's eyes kept traveling.

"Neat, eh?" he remarked.

"Your adjective is insolent," objected Burnival. "She is bewildering! Who is she?"

"Janet Tankerville. Ingenue in 'The Laughter of Heaven' company."

In less than a week Burnival had won an introduction to the young goddess, and embarked upon a course of heavy expenditures. In payment therefor, Miss Tankerville smiled at him, called him "dear boy", and let him wear one of her rings and address her by her given name.

A fortnight later he asked her to marry him.

"Poor boy," she answered with drooping eyelids, "I can't."

"Why not?" he demanded.

"I *am* married."

"Married!" gasped Burnival.

"My husband is on the road—in vaudeville."

Burnival, clutching at the straw of the encouragement he fancied he had detected in her attitude toward him in the past, demanded: "But do you love him?"

"Why, yes, in a way. He adores me. If I threw him over he would kill himself. He worships the pine boards I dance on."

Burnival argued, entreated, implored and besought.

"There's nothing doing, Burnie," she replied. "I'm sorry you feel this way about me. Honestly I am. I didn't know. I thought it was only friendship."

"Friendship!" groaned the youth. "I've loved you from the second I saw you."

"From the second! I thought you had loved me from the first," she said cooly.

To-night, after a year of futile adoration, the rich young man sat alone in the same café. The events of the strange year passed in review in his mind, from the evening when the doors of heaven had opened before his amazed eyes, down to his hopeless, miserable, beaten decision to seek oblivion in a long flight.

The café was filling rapidly with dinner patrons. On every hand he

heard men discussing the petty affairs of life—the German drive on Warsaw, the automobile show at Grand Central Palace, the newest Broadway plays. To Burnival, these conversational bits that were carried to his ears were as the arid sands of a hopeless desert of a world. Then his eyes roved to the table where he had first seen Miss Tankerville, and he felt himself drooping deeper into the ocean of his misery.

In the midst of his bitter ruminations, fate pulled one of her innumerable strings, and the head-waiter conducted a newcomer to Burnival's table. He was tall, dark, excellently groomed. He had the easy manner, poise and assurance of one who knows the nooks and corners of the Big Town's places to eat, and feels no sense of inferiority in the presence of a head-waiter. His brown eyes traveled down his menu's bewildering array of dishes in the manner of one familiar with French and with the exact location, on the long card, of entrées ready to be served.

"Good old place, this," he volunteered, looking at Burnival.

Into the latter's eyes shot the mute challenge of one who does not crave conversation. He politely regarded the other's droll eyes, short, saucer nose, good-humored mouth and Brewster-green cravat, but made no answer.

"As cheerful a place as there is in New York," continued the other, not at all disconcerted. "Quiet, restful and dignified—at least until the after-theater stampede starts and the cabaret gets going."

"That's right," offered Burnival, oddly drawn to his companion. "Still, this place has played the very devil with my life. It's the cause of every trouble I have," he added, obeying a sudden impulse before he knew what he was doing.

"No!" ejaculated his companion.

"However O. Henry once remarked that there's a story at every New York street crossing and a novel in every block. Why shouldn't there be a tragedy in every café?"

"There is," replied Burnival. "Because I sat at this table one night about a year ago, I have blown completely up. Why, last night I was on the verge of a short-circuit into eternity's subway."

"This is awful!" exclaimed the other. "How did that happen? If I may ask."

"I'll give you one guess."

"Money?"

"I have more than I need," said Burnival dolefully.

"Then it's a woman."

Burnival nodded.

"But surely," urged the other, "you can escape her in some other way than by suicide!"

"Escape her! You misunderstand. I love her. I must have her!"

"Ah, then she loves another?"

"She has a husband. He would kill himself if she threw him over. But I have reason to believe that, were it not for him, I could win her."

The stranger laughed. Then he added seriously, explanatorily: "I do not laugh because of your love. I was merely contrasting our singularly different situations."

"How do you mean?" demanded Burnival, with a show of interest.

"For my part, curiously enough, though once happily married, I am now miserable. My wife is a good, sweet woman, a beautiful woman. But another has come into my life. What am I to do? Desert my wife? Unthinkable. She loves me, and it would not be right to throw her over. Some men, similarly placed, might do so. But I wouldn't have the cruelty to do it."

Thus will utter strangers sometimes reveal to each other the deeper secrets of the heart. The sense of

vastness which broods over New York's millions will sometimes unlock the tongues of the lonely. The heavy heart rebels against lugging its burden alone.

"The early struggles," continued Burnival's companion, "through which my wife stuck to me, make me shrink from telling her I am in love with another. So, like a sentimental coward, I have just gone on pretending. You spoke of suicide," he added abruptly. "What other plan have you in mind?"

"I sail to-night for Buenos Aires," answered Burnival moodily. "The woman I adore will never know what has become of me. She will probably think of me as dead, unless at times when she steps out into the glare of the footlights, she may possibly wonder vaguely if I am in the audience."

"The footlights!" exclaimed the other.

"Yes, she's an actress."

"No! Well, here is a coincidence! My wife's an actress, too. Your story interests me. Believe me, it does. And where does this woman you speak of play? Here in town?"

"Yes. On Broadway," said Burnival drearily.

"And her husband? Is he an actor too?"

"Yes. He's in vaudeville. On the road, somewhere in the West the last I heard."

"What! In the vaudeville? Why that's my stunt. I'm just in from the road. A dog's life, take it from me. But say, upon my blasted word, you've got me all on edge with curiosity. Who is the woman, if I may make so bold as to ask?"

"I'd rather not mention her name," answered the dejected Burnival.

"You sail to-night. I shall guard your secret well," said his companion, leaning forward with ear cocked confidentially.

"After all, you might as well know it all," replied Burnival. "She's in 'The Laughter of Heaven' Company. Janet Tankerville."

At the mention of the name, Burnival's companion nearly bounded out of his chair. "Great Scotland!" he groaned. "Janet Tankerville is my wife!"

"Don't joke!" snarled Burnival.

"It's the truth, as Heaven is my judge!"

Burnival sagged limply in his chair. His brain seemed caved-in by the other's announcement. He could neither think nor speak. His companion was the first to speak. He said:

"Will you tell me what in the name of everything that is weird and uncanny, ever brought you and me together here to-night?"

"You're her husband—her husband—" Burnival, still in a daze, was muttering repeatedly.

"Yes. And listen. I tremble at the thought that I might have eaten my dinner to-night at some other of the million odd tables in New York."

Burnival looked at the other with vague inquiry.

"I say," he then became dimly aware that the other was saying, "why can't you and I get together, now that we have stumbled upon this incredible state of affairs, and perhaps make life a little more livable for each other?"

"What do you mean?" asked Burnival, still incapable of connected thought.

"To begin with, let me make a painful and ignoble confession. One reason that I have never made a more determined effort to break with my wife was because she has had a considerably larger earning power than I. In fact, she has been sending money to me on the road. Theatrically, as you know, she has landed, while my own miserable pittance

has hardly been enough to keep me decently clothed. That is perhaps the chief reason why I kept writing the adoring letters. It's been despicable in me, I admit."

"I ought to punch your face," said Burnival with spirit.

"I know you ought. But let's put personal animosities aside for the moment."

"Well?" glowered Burnival.

"I have a proposition to make," said the other rapidly. "It's this. Turn over to me your transportation to South America, let me sail in your name, provide me with enough funds to enable me to get on my feet in a modest way down there, and I'll agree to get out of New York to-night, and never come back. You'll then have a clear coast. With me out of the way, you say that Janet will marry you. All right. I'll eliminate myself. I'll vanish—and stay vanished. She gets her divorce. You marry her."

"She may cling for years to the hope that you might return," objected Burnival dubiously.

"I doubt it. But to guard against anything like that, suppose that before I sail, I write her a letter, saying that I'm on my way to South America—with another woman! That will end it. For I propose, as a matter of fact, to take the woman I love with me."

"The time is short," broke in Burnival.

"She is loyal, and will do as I say."

Burnival mused. "In addition to the transportation for yourself, about how much money would you require?"

"Say five thousand dollars."

Burnival hesitated.

"A small sum, considering what you're getting!" spoke up the other.

"I was wondering if it would be enough. Suppose we say ten

thousand. I am not insensible to the sacrifice you are making."

"As you like. You are more than generous."

"Since you sail to-night, a check would be of no service to you. I'll call a taxi, and we'll drive over to one of the night banks where they know me," proposed Burnival.

Fifteen minutes later he handed his companion ten thousand dollars in currency. Before they parted, the latter penned a brief note to Janet, according to the terms of the agreement.

"Good bye," said Burnival, when it was posted. "Good luck, old man. You have saved my life."

"Not at all. You have saved mine. *Adieu.*"

Burnival, counting himself the most fortunate of men, telephoned Miss Tankerville at ten the next morning, and obtained permission to call at her hotel at one and take her to luncheon. It was a glorious mid-winter morning. The crisp air made soul and body tingle as he strode briskly toward the center of his universe. As he proceeded he was marshalling phrases carefully with which to console and cheer his beloved, for by this time her husband's letter must have reached her with its startling information.

"Hello, Burnie," she said. "You haven't been around for a month."

He gazed deep into the necromantic pools of her eyes with much the feeling of a soldier, safe at last from his gamble with death, who beholds once more the creature of his longings, vaguely, bewilderedly, as though through the mists of a wondrous dream.

He sat down beside her in the quiet solitude of the little hotel's modest reception room. He heard her vaguely as she chattered about trivial things. He marveled at her

superb nerve. For surely the letter from her deserting husband must have hurt her grievously. Hard as he strove to appear entirely at his ease, he gradually became aware that his nerves, laboring under the tension of the hour, were getting the better of him. He could stand the suspense no longer.

"What do you hear from your husband?" he asked at length, struggling to make his tones sound casual.

He saw her face turn suddenly serious, and immediately all his senses began to swirl. The room seemed to rock. He laid tight hold of the arms of his chair.

"Mr. Burnival," she said after a moment. "sooner or later I've got to tell you the truth. It might just as well be now."

"Yes," he heard himself say, as though from a distance.

"I haven't got a husband. I've never been married. I've been wearing this solitaire and this plain band ring on my third finger left, simply as a matter of protection. I bought them myself. I began telling the story about a husband in vaudeville because I felt that if I did so I might be spared a good many annoyances. Finally it got to be a habit."

The room had now stopped rocking, leaving Burnival cold and weak.

He wrenched himself together and moaned: "Oh, Janet, why didn't you tell me this before?"

"Because if I had, you would have given me absolutely no rest, you monkey," she laughed sweetly.

Unable to find words, he reached silently for her hand.

"You mustn't do that," she objected, drawing back.

"Why not?" he found strength to ask.

"Because, while I'm not married, I'm engaged to be, for one thing."

"Engaged!"

"Yes. The ceremony is to be performed next Thursday at noon. And it's all so thoroughly romantic!" she continued happily. "It's all news to me, but my fiancé says he knows you!"

"Who is he?" The words fell feebly from Burnival's lips.

"First you must hear the story. I'll make it brief. It's all so strange and wonderful. I hardly know where to begin. I've known him nearly a year. He's the sweetest fellow—and interesting as a book of romance."

The poor, prosaic Burnival winced.

"His one fault, to me at least, was a towering one," continued the young woman. "Having a rich father, the predilections of a man about town, and the temperament of an artistic idler, he had never earned a penny in his life. On this, though I loved him from the start, I based my objections to marrying him. I urged him to get interested in some kind of useful work, to get busy, to find a job. He squirmed, made all manner of excuses, and pleaded. Finally, losing patience, I told him I would refuse to see him again until he could come to me with a certain sum of money that he had earned. He said it was all so sordid. But I sent him away. That was two weeks ago to-morrow. Until to-day, I had heard nothing from him. This morning came a letter. I want you to read it."

Plucking a letter from her bag, Janet handed it to Burnival. He took it with shaking hands. Trembling, he extracted the missive from its envelope. His eyes swam unsteadily through the communication. It ran:

DEAREST TASKMISTRESS:

This is to report that the incredible has at length been achieved. You cast me off

with orders to earn \$5,000. I've doubled the ante you called for and earned \$10,000. Details later. Mr. Burnival, a mutual friend of ours, will bear me witness that I actually earned this money. He will probably get in touch with you to-morrow. If he invites you to take luncheon with him, you have my permission to go—the permission of your now dyed-in-the-wool, tested-and-not-found-wanting, bona fide betrothed. You dine with me to-morrow evening. You may set the day and hour of the ceremony. But it must be within the week.

Yours at last,
DICK.

The letter dropped from Burnival's weak fingers. Recovering it, he handed it to the girl at his side in silence. Dark, dancing spots seemed to envelop him. Out of them came the face of a man—a fellow of easy manner, poise, assurance, with brown droll eyes, short nose, good-humored mouth, and a Brewster green cravat. Then sentences began floating to his ears—the odd terms of a whimsical compact.

"He earned it. He certainly earned it. There's no doubt about his having earned it," said Burnival as steadily as he could.

"Isn't it wonderful!" said the girl at his side.

"It's horrible!" he answered huskily.

That afternoon Burnival found at his club a letter addressed to him in the same handwriting. Enclosed was a steamship ticket, good for one first-class cabin passage to Buenos Aires on a ship that sailed last night.

MY DEAR MR. BURNIVAL (ran the brief note): Here is your steamer ticket. I shall return the \$10,000 after Miss Tankerville has seen and touched the currency. I make no apologies. You and I both hold that all is traditionally fair in a case like this. That came out in the course of our little chat last night.

Burnival looked twice at the signature. It was the name of the only son of one of the wealthiest men in America.

Distinguished Service

by Frederick Simpich

A TENSE, expectant air of suppressed excitement pervaded the big, fort-like British Consulate. Down in its walled compound, set square on the river bank, the half hundred Sikhs of the Indian guard whispered together restlessly; and out on the moonlit deck of the little gunboat *Comet*—anchored in the yellow Tigris a few yards off the Consular wharf—her barefoot Hindu sailors squatted in chattering groups, eager for the fray that rumor promised.

Days before, when the first news that war might break had flashed to Bagdad, all Britons save the handful at the Consulate had left hurriedly for the safety of the Persian Gulf ports.

And now, up on the flat roof of the main consular building, his wife and two officers of his staff about him, British Consul Steele sat in anxious reflection. Like all *Bagdaddis* they spent the evening on the roof, in quest of any air that stirred. For it was night now, suffocating night in the midst of the "date heat" or the "thirty days of fire" that Allah sends each year to ripen the palm-fruit for his Bedouin children. And brooding, mud-walled Bagdad sweltered, dust-gray and panting.

"It does look a bit nasty, I'll admit," the Consul was saying, "though my last message from the Embassy a week ago assured me that we should be warned in time to leave, in case war seemed imminent."

"Yes, but since then the Constantinople wire has been cut," argued Faris, who commanded the *Comet*, "and the Embassy couldn't get a

warning through to us if it tried."

"And the Gulf wire from Basra went out three days ago," added McKenzie, the staff physician, reiterating this fact for the third time in ten minutes.

"War may have started already, for all we know," observed the Consul's wife. She was not quite sure that she relished the distinction of being the last white woman to remain in Bagdad.

"No fear!" declared Faris, "or we'd have heard from our friends over there." And he nodded towards the ugly mud forts of the *Wali Pasha* that faced them from across the river.

"How could they hear that war's been declared, if the wires are down?" quibbled McKenzie.

"O, we'd be safe enough anyway, if we had only the Turks to deal with," said Steele irritably. "But it's the Arabs we got to figure on—especially the Montefik tribe. Their 'White Sheik', as they call him, started them raiding at the first hint of war. And there aren't Turks enough in the whole *vilayet* to save Bagdad, if the Bedouins make a rush."

"The *kavass* was telling the cook just before dinner some gossip from the bazaar," interrupted Mrs. Steele. "He says the 'White Sheik' and his camel corps left Kerbela yesterday, marching east. It's reported that they expect our fleet at Basra to send an expedition up river, and they plan to cut it off."

"That's more truth than gossip, I'm afraid," commented the Consul. "I got the news by courier that

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE

they're actually on the way, and bringing artillery."

"Say, who is this White Sheik, anyway?" demanded McKenzie, who was fresh from London. "Rather a rotter, I fancy, from the way everybody damns him."

"I'll tell you!" exclaimed Steele wrathfully, "he's a thief—a shame and a disgrace to every honest Englishman! His real name's Fenn—Rupert Fenn, and he was cashiered years ago for stealing his regiment's money. He dropped from sight after he quit Egypt, where he'd served with the camel corps, and nobody knew or cared where he was. Only recently one of our missionaries found out that the white man leading the Montefiks and known as the White Sheik is Rupert Fenn himself."

"Ah, I see," said McKenzie, "just a common renegade."

"But with most uncommon courage," observed Faris. "A Turkish officer that saw Fenn in action was telling me—"

"Rot!" snorted Steele. "Bally Rot! I never saw a thief yet that would really fight—unless he was cornered, like a rat."

"Perhaps, after all, Government gave the poor chap rather a rough deal," remarked Mrs. Steele. "I was in Cairo at the time, and some say he took his congé rather than disgrace a certain superior whose daughter—"

"Nonsense, my dear!" interrupted the Consul. "One always hears a lot of such sentiment when a crook who is also a lady-killer goes to the dock."

The head *kavass*, hastening abruptly up and, saluting the Consul, cut short the conversation. Steele excused himself, and went to see what the guard wanted.

"I'll rejoin you in a moment," he called, as he started for the big stair-

way leading down into the compound. "The *kavass* says there's an Arab to see me on urgent business."

Random war prophesies had been resumed among the trio on the roof when Steele suddenly reappeared, followed by a tall, bearded man in Arab dress.

"Here's my Arab," he chuckled in amusement, as he led the stranger up.

Mrs. Steele arose quickly, astonished at this invasion of the privacy of the roof by a ragged Arab of the desert, and more astonished that her husband should aid and abet the desecration.

"It's all right, my dear," Steele assured her with unwonted gaiety. "Let me present Lieutenant Nelson of our Gulf Fleet. He's just up from Basra."

"I put on this Arab disguise, to get through more easily," explained Nelson, as the amazed circle on the roof crowded about him with a volley of questions.

Answering them briefly, he told how he had slipped out of Basra accompanied only by a Zanzibar servant, purloined a camel and made a forced march north.

"But tell us," interrupted Steele impatiently, "has war been declared?"

"It hadn't when I left," explained Nelson, "but my superior, Commander Drake, was expecting a cable any hour, saying that the big fight was on. The fleet is at Basra, but the river's too low to send a relief vessel up to Bagdad—and the Admiral hasn't men enough to risk a land expedition. So, to come quickly to the point of my mission, it is urged that you and your staff board the *Comet* and start for Basra."

"Then Drake thinks we're in danger?" questioned the Consul.

"In very grave danger," asserted Nelson positively. "There's a gen-

eral Arab uprising—and they'll of course take advantage of the war to get back at their old enemies, the Turks. The Montefik tribes are headed for the river country now, and you'll probably have a brush with them on your way down to Basra."

Steele was a trained man, quick to think. He knew that Drake of the Royal Indian Marine was a cool officer on whose judgment he could rely. If Drake said "come," it was ample evidence that things were getting serious.

Without further parley he sent for the Sirdar, who commanded the small Sikh garrison, and gave orders for an immediate but quiet embarkation.

Barely an hour after Nelson's arrival the *Comet* was ready to sail. As a precaution Faris extinguished all lights, and let his ship drop down stream the first half-mile, borne only by the current. When past the forts—and the lawless Arab quarter—he started the engines.

II

Lieutenant Wade, second in command, was the only white officer beside Faris attached to the *Comet*, and he had taken the bridge after midnight, when the Captain retired. It was after sunrise now, and Faris was at breakfast with Nelson and his guests from the Consulate, when Wade suddenly appeared at the saloon door.

"Beg pardon, sir," he reported, "We've sighted Arab scouts, riding down the west bank. I think it's the same party that burnt the signal fires ahead of us about dawn."

"Montefiks?" asked Faris.

"Yes, sir, you can tell 'em by their beasts—they always ride the two-humped kind."

Faris looked significantly at the Consul. "The White Sheikh has beat

us to the loop," he said. He got up and followed Wade back up on the bridge. Then Nelson, who had discarded his Arab outfit for one of Steele's duck suits, also excused himself from the table, and joined Faris and Wade.

"It's an hour's ride yet to the loop—we might as well finish breakfast," observed the Consul.

"You're all so certain the Arabs will be at the loop, one might almost fancy you had an engagement to meet them there," remarked Mrs. Steele.

"Every time they've fired on a steamer, it's always been at that point," asserted the Consul.

"What is this loop, anyway?" queried McKenzie.

"Why, it's just a loop," answered Steele. "It's like this," he added, tracing a map in the air with his fruit knife; "the stream turns sharp to the east for half a mile, then swings south in a half circle and flows back west again. So if the Arabs take position on the narrow peninsula, they can shoot twice at any passing boat—once as she enters the loop and again as she passes out of it. Understand?"

"I see. And if this White Sheikh crowd gets in there with artillery, they'll surely smoke us up!" predicted the doctor wisely.

On the *Comet's* bridge, lightly armored with boiler-plate, she carried two machine-guns; a pom-pom stood on her forward deck, and back astern was mounted a three-inch French piece. Besides this, she had a full stand of rifles for her black crew of forty. And loop-holed boiler plate, about four feet high, belted the whole of her main deck.

In the after-hold was a small storeroom, in which, it had been agreed, Mrs. Steele should take refuge, "in case of music," as Faris phrased it.

All defence arrangements were

now complete, and the Sirdar was giving final instructions to his turbaned fighters, who squatted in line along the deck behind the shield, rifles in hand.

III

Nelson had taken Wade's glasses, and for some minutes, as they neared the loop, he closely scanned the brush-grown river banks ahead.

"All right, fellows!" he said suddenly. "They're ready for us."

"My word! I should say so," echoed Faris. "It looks as if the whole bally tribe had turned out."

As the Captain lowered his binoculars, Nelson came to attention and saluted.

"Captain Faris," he said briskly. "We'll be fighting in a minute—and I place myself at your orders."

"Right!" said Faris. "Take the pom-pom gun. I command the bridge gun crew, and Wade will navigate. The Sirdar will handle the rifles. And when I cut loose up here, you fellows go to it!"

"Yes, sir!" said Nelson, saluting and descending the ladder.

"You take the place of any white chap that's winged," ordered Faris, addressing the Consul. "And in the meantime, stay off the bridge."

"Aw, give me a gun!" growled Steele, "I want to shoot."

"You go below, and stay under cover," ordered Faris evenly.

"Certainly," answered Steele slowly, looking foolish, as he backed down the ladder. It was hard for him to realize that he was no longer the omnipotent consul at Bagdad, ordering his subordinates about at will—that he was now merely a civilian, caught on a gunboat during action and subject absolutely to the commander's orders.

The *Comet* had now steamed into a long, straight stretch of river that ended abruptly in the first sharp bend

of the loop, and scores of the enemy could be seen settling among the licorice bushes on the bank where hurried trenches had been dug.

"Suffering gulls!" exclaimed Wade. "The woods are full of 'em."

As he spoke a puff of smoke appeared suddenly among the licorice brush, the gun boomed, and an instant later came the crash of the exploding shell.

"Rotten shooting," hooted Wade, as the shell burst five hundred meters short of its mark.

"Watch your channel," snapped Faris, "and stay off the sand-bars. This is no time to take her overland!"

"Yes, sir!"

"Hold 'er in deep water, and full speed ahead!"

"Yes, sir!" responded Wade respectfully.

Scarcely 800 meters separated them from the enemy now and Faris, who had located the Arab field-piece by its smoke, was directing the aim of his machine-gun crew.

"Now—give 'em the pills!" he ordered.

With a crack and rattle, sputtering like a giant motor, the machine-guns poured out their twin streams of screaming lead. And instantly from below followed the hoarse snarl of Nelson's pom-pom, and the crash of orderly volleys from the rifles of the imperturbable Sikhs.

The Bedouins, lying flat on their bellies in shallow holes scooped in the sand half hidden among the licorice brush, answered the *Comet* with a scattering fire, their bullets smacking viciously against the boat's iron shields.

Again an Arab shell, belched from the nose of one of their guns, cleverly hidden behind a heap of sand and brush, whined ominously not two feet above the *Comet's* bridge—only to explode harmlessly far astern.

"Who said the White Sheik could point a gun?" sneered Steele, as he crouched beside Nelson. The latter, reloading his pom-pom, made no reply. But with a satisfied grin he carefully aimed his piece at the spot where the Arab's hidden gun had showed its smoke-puff; and as he fired, a cloud of dust and brush arose, revealing the Bedouin cannon and its scattering crew. The admiring Sikhs cheered loudly.

"Good work!" echoed Steele.

The *Comet*, steaming rapidly now for the curve that would sweep her past the enemy, bumped suddenly against some hidden, yielding thing and came slowly to a swaying, sickening stop—though her engines still ran at full speed.

As she struck, an exultant chorus of taunting yells arose from the Bedouin devils ashore, who immediately quickened their fire on the helpless steamer.

"We're on the mud!" bawled Wade.

"No—it's a rope!" shouted Faris, whose keen eyes had already discerned the obstacle—an old trick among river Arabs.

"Back 'er up!" he ordered, shouting close in Wade's ear to make himself heard amid the now constant roar of the guns.

Wade signalled quickly for reverse engines, and the *Comet* began backing slowly upstream—only to stick again after retreating but a few feet.

"Anchor's fouled," Wade shouted excitedly, as an Arab shell, bursting square against the corners of the bridge shield tore a yawning hole in the thin, light metal and dropped one of the black gunners.

"This is nasty!" growled Faris, blowing his whistle for a man from below to take the place of the fallen gunner.

Their plight was indeed critical. From bank to bank of the channel,

very narrow at this point, the Arabs had stretched a giant hawser woven from palm fiber, anchoring each end to a block buried deep in the sand. Held on floats nearly submerged, it had been hardly visible to those on the bridge who, at the moment of collision, had had eyes only for the enemy.

And when Faris ordered Wade to back up, the *Comet's* anchor, swung beside her nose and barely above the surface of the river, had hooked the strands of the thick, rough hawser; so, now, the steamer could neither move forward nor back upstream to safety; it could only swing helplessly in midstream, a captive target for the ever-increasing fire of the Arabs who had now got the range.

Believing he might push the cable free from the anchor by means of a boat hook, Faris slid quickly down the bridge ladder, almost falling in his haste—only to collide with Nelson who had siezed an axe from the rack and was running forward.

"Where are you going?" shouted the Captain.

"To chop that hawser!"

"And get shot!" exploded Faris. "Wait a minute—I'll get a boat hook—"

"We've got to bust it—quick—or they'll sink us. Let me go!" demanded Nelson, as Faris seized his arm.

"Stop him—he's mad!" cried Steele, as he saw Nelson wrench loose and leap for the steamer's bow.

Faris whirled and shouted to the Sirdar to keep all rifles going hot and fast. Then he ran for a coil of rope.

The *Comet's* deck was not over eighteen inches above the river, and the hawser, now stretched tight by the straining pull of the speeding engines, was in easy reach of Nelson—if only he could live long enough to swing his axe.

Steele, peering through a bow

loophole, watched breathlessly as Nelson, poised on the narrow strip of deck outside the rail and holding onto a stanchion with one hand, swung his axe with the other. From the shrieking Arabs ashore a hellish fusillade continued, in spite of all that the *Comet's* smoking guns could do to check the hostile fire and to cover Nelson's perilous undertaking. Bullets thicker than flies pinged and spat about the Englishman, who again and again raised his axe and hacked at the thick, tough hawser—hacked and hacked, till it snapped apart and let the *Comet* float forward, a free boat.

Dropping his axe, Nelson whirled quickly and Steele saw him grab for the top edge of the shield to vault back to safety. But even as he crouched to spring his hands slipped from the rail and, twisting oddly, he fell sidewise into the yellow stream.

"God—one little second more!" groaned Steele, turning dizzily away, only to behold Faris leaping over into the river—a line about his body, its slack end held by the Sirdar. In a moment Faris had clutched his man in the water as he swept past the steamer's side. It was a straining test of sheer strength, but the Captain managed to hold on to his burden until two giant Sikhs had scrambled over the rail to his aid.

"Where are you hurt?" queried McKenzie, helping to lift Nelson on to the deck.

The *Comet* was in the deadly curve now, and rapidly turning away from the Arabs on the outer angle of the bend—thus affording the first chance to use her shrapnel guns mounted on the after deck.

"Never mind me now," grumbled Nelson, rising unsteadily and starting astern, the water dripping from his clothes. "I'm not much hurt—and I want to point that gun."

In another stride he had reached

the stern, and knelt behind the cannon. With practiced eye he deftly timed a shell, loaded, trained the gun and fired. At such short range the two reports came almost as one, the shell bursting low over the shallow trenches ashore. Again and again, as the *Comet* retreated from them, Nelson placed his shells unerringly among the Bedouin enemy.

"Shooting, man! Shooting!" cheered Steele approvingly as he watched a shell wipe out the Arab crew of one of the field pieces.

"The White Sheik can't tie that score," added the Consul, admiringly.

The *Comet* had veered to the south on her swing about the loop now, and Faris whistled an order to cease firing.

"We can't see much more of 'em," he explained, "till we get back on the west stretch. Then you can shoot 'em up again," he added, patting Nelson on the shoulder.

Steele had gone to the storeroom hatch to tell his wife the news of the fight. McKenzie was busy. Four Sikhs had been killed, and seven wounded—two or three fatally. Faris had stopped to speak a word of encouragement to one of the wounded men when the Sirdar came hurriedly back with a message from Wade.

"The enemy's withdrawing, sir!" he reported in Hindustani, saluting.

"What!" said Faris, incredulous, running for the bridge and calling to Steele to follow him.

It was true. The Arabs were in full retreat. As the *Comet* turned into the south half of the loop and headed west, scores of the turbaned Bedouins, rifles in hand and white zibboons flying as they ran, could be seen scrambling from the licorice brush and making for the shelter of the low sand hills to the west. From behind these same dunes they had

hastily led out their camels and hooked them to the light cannon, which were now being jerked rapidly away from the late field of battle.

"What stampeded 'em?" queried Wade.

"Can't say," remarked Steele, "but they're all on the run."

"Not *all* of 'em," observed Faris grimly. "We made good Arabs of that bunch lying in the brush—their running days are over."

"Look! Look there!" cried Wade suddenly pointing downstream to where a steamer was emerging swiftly from behind a string of date palms that fringed the river bank. "That's what scared 'em! It's the Basra patrol boat, flying Drake's flag," he added, studying the approaching craft through his glasses.

"By Gad, it is!" echoed the Consul in amazement. And he hastened down to rescue his wife from the storeroom.

"You're right, Wade, it's the old *Lark*, sure's you're knee high to a duck," agreed Faris, "I'd know her anywhere—used to serve on her."

"Hey, Sirdar," he ordered, calling to the native officer below, "have your men fall out; the fighting's over."

Mrs. Steele, half smothered from her term in the storehouse, suffered herself to be pushed up the bridge ladder by her excited husband.

"See it? See it?" called Steele, pointing out the approaching boat to his wife.

"But they said the Gulf fleet couldn't come upstream," she argued, with feminine contrariety.

"It's not one of the Gulf fleet," explained Faris, "it's the *Lark*—the Basra patrol boat, flying Drake's flag."

IV

Clearing the loop they now sped south on a long, straight stretch of

deep water, closing rapidly in on the other gunboat. Apparently the newcomer had also identified the *Comet*, and must have been seeking her, for, as the latter drew near, the *Lark* slowed down to wait for her.

Crowded in the *Comet's* bow the Sikhs and Faris's black crew were cheering lustily.

Under orders from the Captain, Wade swung over and slowed down to drop alongside.

"By Jove, there's Drake himself on the bridge," said Steele.

As the boats, skilfully maneuvered, bumped gently, Commander Drake and his flag lieutenant climbed easily across to the bridge of the *Comet*.

"What in the world delayed you so?" asked Drake of the Consul, when greetings and brief details of the fight had been exchanged. "I wired you to come six days ago, when I had advance news that war would start."

"Is war declared?" asked Steele quickly.

"Day before yesterday," answered Drake. "We took Basra last night, with slight losses."

"I didn't get your wire," said Steele, "But, thank God, your Lieutenant got through with your message."

"Who—?" began Drake.

"O Captain! I say, Captain!" interrupted McKenzie, calling anxiously from the foot of the bridge ladder. "Come quick—I'm afraid Nelson's going!"

Faris, startled, ran quickly down the ladder, following the doctor back to where Nelson lay stretched on the deck beside the gun he had handled so effectively. Close behind came Steele and his wife, with the Commander.

"Poor chap," said McKenzie, "he's unconscious—toppled over as he was helping me lift a wounded Sikh."

"Where's he hurt?" asked Faris, anxiously.

"Right breast—got the lung, I think."

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Steele, "You mean to say he worked that gun that way, with a hole through him."

"More than that," answered McKenzie, "Singular case—his wound's at least three days old."

The Zanzibar negro—Nelson's boy whom all had forgotten in the excitement—was crouching now beside his prostrate master, crooning savagely. At a question from Faris he burst into voluble Arabic.

"Nelson saved the day for us, Drake," said Steele, brokenly. "He must have got his wound on the way up with your message."

"My message?" queried Drake, nonplussed.

"Yes, the word you sent him to bring"—

"Sent *him*?" said Drake slowly. "I never saw him before!"

"Beg pardon, sir," interrupted Captain Faris. "The boy says the Arabs shot Nelson because he wouldn't go with them to attack British boats. He says after his Sahib was wounded—and had escaped

from the Arabs—he told him, the nigger, that if he died the nigger should go on to Bagdad and warn the Consul to leave for Basra."

"What's all this, anyway?" demanded Drake, in bewilderment.

For an instant the little party stared, one at the other, perplexed—some of them looking doubtfully at Drake.

McKenzie had been on his knees beside Nelson. "He's gone, poor fellow!" he said shakily, as he arose and handed a small object to the Commander. "This was on a string about his neck."

Drake took the worn medal, and slowly read the inscription. Twice he sought to speak—then turned silently and passed the medal to Steele, who read the words on it with Faris looking over his shoulder.

Then Steele—staring incredulously at the dead Englishman on the deck—handed the medal to his wife. In a moment Mrs. Steele was sobbing audibly. The medal was inscribed:

"To Captain Rupert Fenn
Egyptian Artillery
Distinguished Service
1900"

SPRING FASHIONS

BY NEETA MARQUIS

I FIND the fashion notes for spring
Writ large on meadow ways and hills.
Pale gold remains, as ever, chic
For buttercups and daffodils.

The season favors rich display:
Green velvets clothe each field I pass,
While, with the running breeze, I hear
A silken frou-frou in the grass.

"A DAWG DONE IT"

BY WARNER WELLS

"JESTICE," says you; why, ther's as much jestice to the square mile on these here plains as ther' is in the hull state o' Mass'chusetts."

We were bowling across the western plains, I toward my distant post in the Far East, and he toward the metropolis of Arizona, to lay in a new supply of "air-tights" or tinned goods. I had remarked upon the lawlessness of ranch life and the scant facilities for obtaining legal redress, but had elicited only the above rejoinder. Not content with this show of ignorance I proceeded to implicate myself still further.

"I suppose you always go armed on the ranch," I ventured.

"Wall, no, stranger; I seldom put on my shootin' irons onless I'm goin' up to Denver or some other o' them big camps. Cattle thieves and coyotes is easy 'long-side o' them there train sharps as you sometimes crosses the trail of." He glanced at me sharply and I winced.

We drifted into the subject of domestic life on the ranch and the lack of woman's civilizing influence.

"You're right there, pardner, we shorely are shy of females on the plains; and yet, I seen, once in a way, some o' the finest woman-play ever put up west o' the Miss'ippi."

I was devoured with curiosity but had sense enough not to show it. I only pressed another Henry Clay upon him by way of lubrication and waited. The slight look of incredulity that I feigned had its effect.

"It was shorely a case of what you all calls 'romance' out in the States, but you kin jedge f'r yerself. They was fourteen of us on thet run

and we'd jest finished the spring round-up 'n' was layin' 'round camp, sort o' vacatin', when 'long comes a chap f'm Mascot with a tellygram sayin' as how a passel o' tenderfeet f'm Albany was 'lowin' they'd come out 'n' look up some minin' property in the foot-hills o' the Big Buck-horns. They was wimmin with 'em—come along, like enough, to see the 'Fur West' 'n' buy figgered mats 'n' papoose-bags f'm the savages—pay 'nough fer 'em, like as not, to keep the hull pesky reservation fightin' drunk fer a month.

"Well, they wanted to know if some of us boys wouldn't go down to Mascot 'n' sort o' ride herd on 'em up to the hills. Willin'? You bet we was willin'. Every man jack of us jumped fer 'is saddle, 'n' we'd 'a' left thet there camp a howlin' wilderness in ten minutes, if Bill Turner, what was actin' boss, hadn't yelled out, 'Hol' on there, you blasted Lotharios. I can't spare but eight o' ye; so ye'll hev to throw fer it.' Which we throwed fer it, you bet; and the boys what got left looked mad enough to chaw the rest.

"These tenderfeet was due to infest Mascot the comin' Friday, 'n' we hed only two days to cover the ninety-odd miles, so we didn't waste no time hittin' the trail.

"We wan't in no shape to get mixed up in sassiety. I seen Jake Marden spit on 'is hand 'n' rub away at the grease-spots on his old sombrero, 'n' Phil Sutherland was cussin' blue because one o' the boys hed borrowed his little scrap o' lookin' glass 'n' busted it.

"They was one o' our party that hed jined the camp only a couple o' months back. He called himself Sam Griscom, which I knowed he wan't no Sam Griscom neither, fer it was more'n a month 'fore he larned to answer to it fust off. The boys 'lowed he was deef a whole lot. I kep' my mouth shet. It don't do to be pryin' into a man's pedigree too cur'us out on the plains. If he c'n ride a hoss 'n' do his work man-fashion it's no one's business what's behind. When he tumbled into camp his hands was smooth 'n' white 'n' I 'lowed he'd made a bad play someweres out in the States, 'n' thet questions wan't good fer what you all calls 'longevity.' The boys shied at 'im some at fust 'n' I see it hurt 'im, but one day old Sancho, a greaser what we picked up half starved down by the Little Moccasin, got throwed, 'n' a yearlin' bull was comin' fer 'im hell-bent; when what does this 'ere tenderfoot do but run in quick as lightnin' 'n' get a rope around that bull's fore-legs 'n' tangle 'im up complete! It was a mighty purty play 'n' it not only saved the greaser's life but it made the boys respect Griscom a heap. They seen what 'e was made of.

"Well, we come into Mascot shootin' right 'n' left, but high, of course, so's not to hurt the denizens none, only impress 'em a heap. We found a letter there tellin' us about the hull outfit thet we was to tote up into the hills 'n' their names was all there complete. I read 'em out strong to the boys 'n' the last name was Katherine Saunderson. Then I looked up, 'n' I'm locoed if thet Sam Griscom hedn't turned as white as paper. He reached out 'is hand 'n' said, 'Let me see thet letter.' He stood a long time studyin' of it. At last he pulled me aside 'n' said:

"Say, boss, can't you get along with one hand less?"

"'Why, no,' says I, 'it looks like we was mighty short-handed already.' He looked up sort of weary.

"'Well, boss,' says he, 'I don't stay only on one condition. You musn't put me nowhere near them females. I'm soured on 'em.'

"'Shorely,' says I, 'you can hev' charge o' the packs. The wimmin 'll likely want to ride on ahead.'

"When we seen the smoke o' the 'Cannon-ball' comin up through the plain we all lined up on the platform, gay 'n' smilin', all but Griscom, who was loafin' 'round the corner lookin' as ugly as if he'd jest been bluffed outen a two hundred dollar jack-pot. The tenderfeet come a swarmin' out o' the parlor car, 'n' they shorely was a contrast to us. The men was in striped flannel 'n' the wimmin come driftin' down the steps like autumn leaves in York State, all red 'n' yellow 'n' brown. One of 'em, tall 'n' handsome, hed a small animile tied to a long ribbon. I larned afterward thet it was a dawg. It looked like a big ball o' gray yarn with the ends astickin' out all over. The little cuss give a yelp 'n' caught Curly Custer in the laig like he 'lowed he'd chaw a small piece outen him. Curly jumped a rod 'n' let out a big cuss word, what the boss hed warned us against special; but the young woman she runs up to 'im 'n' puts her little hand on his arm 'n' looks up at 'im with tears in 'er blue eyes 'n' says:

"'O, sir, I hope he hasn't hurt you none.'

"Curly stands still a minit, lookin' down at 'er. 'Hurt me?' says he, slow 'n' rapturous. 'Not a little bit. I like it,' says he, 'n' laughs.

"The girl kind o' blushes 'n' backs off. She pulls up the dawg 'n' gives it a cuff as wouldn't put out a candle, 'n' calls it names.

"Pretty soon we drifts over to

the Mansion House, which this same aint no mansion you bet, 'n' gets lined up fer the hills. The females goes ahead 'n' when Griscom 'n' Marden comes to cinch up the packs they finds that the Saunderson girl's small dawg, what got Curly in the laig, is due to ride on one o' the packs. Marden 'lows it's a good play to drop the dawg in the well but Griscom won't listen to it nohow. The little feller looked a heap forlornsome but Griscom makes friends with 'im 'n' soon they was gettin' along like pardners o' ten years' standin'.

"The packs come along about half a mile behind the main party till they strike an old deserted 'dobe where the wimmin 'lows they'll rustle some grub. But when Griscom trails in with the packs he won't stop none. He 'lows he'll hurry on to Sutter's Ranch 'fore sun-down, which is shorely reasonable, seein' 's how Sutter's is still twenty-two mile ahead. So he passes on, leavin' Marden with the mules what packs the grub. He shorely forgets the dawg complete 'n' leaves it behind with Marden.

"Now the cur'us thing about it 'n' the thing what causes the stampede later is thet when we all trails into Sutter's 'n' begins to get bedded down fer the night, thet there small 'n' wuthless dawg turns up missin.' Thet low-down hoss-thief Marden hed come away 'n' left the little begger tied to a bench at the 'dobe where they'd grubbed. No one thought much about it till this here blue-eyed oory comes out of 'er tent 'n' puckers up 'er little mouth to whistle. Then fer the first time we becomes aware that there's a deep crossoin' ahead.

"When she finds out thet the dawg is gone she sets up a howl 'n' takes on like she's left behind a child er a bottle o' nose-paint 'r some sech val-

lyble. I found Griscom out behind the corral a jawin' Marden like he was his own wife 'n' 'lowin' thet lynchin' 's too good fer a man as would tie up a innercent dawg 'n' let it starve.

"'Long 'bout midnight the Saunderson girl gits the wire-edge worked offen 'er sorrer, 'n' the camp goes to sleep—all but Griscom, who says he ain't tired none and 'lows he'll keep his eye on the ponies to see that none on 'em slips their hobbles. I was jest a droppin' off when I heard a footfall over yonder, 'n' raisin' on my elbow I seen Griscom ridin' out o' camp on the best pony in the bunch. I supposed he was only takin' a little run around the camp so I lay back 'n' went to sleep.

"Well, I'm plumb locoed if I didn't wake up next mornin' to the yelp o' thet same small dawg 'n' at the same time I heard psa'ms o' rejoicin' f'm the wimmins' tent, wuss'n if the prodigal son hed come back f'm his little fling down to St. Louis. And there by the fire stood Griscom lookin' gray 'n' tired. But even then I never guessed. I supposed the dawg had wandered in, same's a hound dawg would 'a' done, all similar.

"Griscom held a small package in his hand, 'n' asked if a female by the name o' Cassidy lived on the ranch. Someone says yes 'n' Griscom says he must see 'er. I seen him later givin' the package to 'er through the kitchen winder as I was a packin' a pail o' water f'm the well.

"We set to work rustlin' the grub 'n' I forgot all about Griscom, when in come a dozen fellers on the run, their hosses lathered f'm ears to crupper. When I got down to 'em they was tellin' as how a stage over on the Millville mail route, what we had crossed the day before, hed been held up over night. One passenger

hed been killed 'n' a heap o' money 'n' vallybles hed been stampeded. I give a jump like I was shot 'n' looked at Griscom, but he was calm as a sheep. I went over 'n' spoke to 'im privit fer a minit 'n' he flushes up 'n' says 'Tell the gentlemen all you know, 'n' welcome,' says he, a heap scornful. I told 'em an' they panted fer the house, emergin' therefrom mighty prompt with the package I hed seen. I heard Missis Cassidy takin' on like she was locoed. It didn't take a minit to tie up the Griscom feller while the boys was pawin' over the contents o' thet package. It was all there, the bank-bills, money-orders, watches, rings 'n' everything.

"It shorely looked like a boggy crossin' fer pore Griscom. O' course I hed to testify as how I'd seen him ride away in the night and come in with the package 'n' give it to the Cassidy woman. I hated to, worse 'n' t'rant'lers, fer I'd come to like this tenderfoot, but I wan't out to play no crooked game, an' if he was the man he must stretch fer it.

"The head man o' the posse put it up to the pris'ner huccome he to hev this here booty 'n' be ridin' out o' camp at midnight. He stood up straight 's he could, bein' roped like he was, and said slow 'n' impressive:

"'I ain't no thief 'n' I ain't held up no stage. I didn't know what thet there package contained, but as fer ridin' out at night, that ain't agin the law and where I went 'n' what I did is none o' your business,' and he looked mighty hard 'n' sot.

"Them fellers was shorely wild, 'n' we too was some took back, fer it looked like it was a plain case.

"Now you know, stranger, that jestic is some prompt out here on the plains. We don't let no lawyer wolves come prowlin' 'round provin' alleybys 'n' sech, 'n' cheatin' jestic

a hull lot. We says 'Here's the facts, here's the man, here's the proofs, 'n' here's the halter'; 'n' the hull thing's done up complete in half an hour.

"Wall, the boys set down and figured it out right thar. The stage hed been held up, the booty hed been brought in by Griscom, who'd been out all night 'n' wouldn't tell where he'd been. The facts was all dead agin 'im. He said it didn't make much difference arter all, if we *did* stretch 'im. He shorely looked mighty desprit.

"The' was no call fer delay, so one o' the boys, wot rode in with the news, threw a lariat over a beam 'n' tied it around Griscom's neck. Everything was ready to give the felon a free pass out o' this vale o' tears—when whatever do you think happens? Thet there Saunderson female comes a sa'nterin' 'round the corner o' the shed plumb into court. She was a totin' the small dawg in 'er arms like he was tired. When she sees what's goin' on, she stops short 'n' turns first white 'n' then red an' then both together, not seemin' to know whether to raise a yell fer help 'r stampede out o' court. The small dawg decides it fer 'er. The minit he ketches sight o' Griscom he kicks hisself outen the lady's arms 'n' runs up to him 'n' jumps on him 'n' licks his hand 'n' takes on like he's found his long lost brother. I looks at Griscom 'n' the hardness hes all gone out o' his face 'n' it's all tender 'n' shakey, like a woman's. The girl jumps forrard with a little cry 'n' says, all out o' breath, 'Why, it must 'a' been you who went back fer Nip,' says she. Then it all comes to me in a flash how this Griscom must 'a' gone back the hull twenty-two mile to save that small dawg. But he just hangs 'is head 'n' tries to turn it from 'er as if he didn't want her to see him.

"She turns on the boys like she's a

cow defendin' of 'er offspring 'n' stamps 'er little foot 'n' says mighty haughty—"What 'r' you low-down sots a doin' tryin' to stretch this here friend o' mine?" Leastways, that's what she meant.

"Some o' the boys on the joory looks oneasy but the jedge who was settin' on a hen-coop speaks up 'n' tells 'er what for her friend's up agin the law, but 'e ain't more'n half through before she calls 'is hand 'n' shows 'im that it's all on account o' the dawg. We looks at Griscom who keeps 'is head turned away but confesses thet it was the dawg 'e went after. The minit 'e says this the girl runs to 'im 'n' puts 'er hands around 'is neck 'n' tries to take the rope off. As she's worryin' with the knot she get's a good look at 'is face 'n' gives a jump like a rattle-snake stung 'er.

"'Richard Blake!' she sort o' gasps, 'n' would 'a' fell if I hedn't put my arm around 'er. Griscom throws 'is head up 'n' looks at 'er proud as a king 'n' says, 'Yes, Kitty, it's me, but I didn't never mean to let you know. It's the dawg wot's to blame! She shakes 'erself free f'm my arm too soon fer my likin' an' asks 'im what fer 'e ever run away f'm Albany. Then it all comes out as how Blake was engaged to 'er back in the States. He worked in the same bank as her brother. A big robbery was played on the bank 'n' Blake knowed her brother done it. So to save her family f'm disgrace Blake broke camp 'n' hit the trail fer the West all secret, leavin' 'em to suppose he took the hull stack o' blues. But she tells him now as how her brother owns up to the crime 'n' gives back the money.

"When she got this far the court was again split wide open by the Cassidy female who comes runnin' 'round the corner wailin' powerful. She 'lows between 'er sobs as how she can't stand it: It was 'er hus-

band wot held up the stage, and not darin' to come into camp he'd met Griscom on the road 'n' got 'im to bring the package to 'er.

"Marden leads 'er away weepin' vy'lant. The Saunderson girl walks away with Gris—with Blake, up the draw like they was the only two people on 'arth. And they leave thet there court bogged clean up to the hubs. We was shorely a fool court. The jedge lifted 'is head outen 'is hands 'n' looked around sorrowful.

"'An' a dawg done it,' he says, a heap mournful. 'A dawg no bigger'n a mule's upper lip f'm 'is eyes down—spiled the best hangin' I've enjoyed fer two years.'

"But at thet very minit a idee struck me squar' between the eyes 'n' staggered me. Then I got up 'n' made the only speech o' my life.

"'Ladies 'n' gents,' says I, 'n' then I stopped short 'n' choked fer I knowed I'd made a wrong play, but the jedge smiled a heap sad and said: 'Yes, they's wimmin enough here, go on.'

"'Gentlemen o' the joory,' says I. 'Here we be a-mournin' our luck thet a dawg come between us 'n' a hangin' when we better be a singin' hallyloojer thet we was saved f'm killin' a innercent man. See wot 'e done back thar in the States—give up the sweetest little girl in the world wot makes yer mouth water jest to see 'er a mile away; an' all to save 'er f'm seein' thet brother o' hern put in jail. Then 'e keeps 'is mouth shet here 'n' 's goin' to take a hangin' jest to save thet Cassidy female f'm losin' 'er man. I tells you we've got to make it up to 'im somehow. An' I ventures to propose that we 'pint a committee to wait on this 'ere young female wot ought to 'a' been married months back, 'n' ask 'er all perlite if she won't stand up with this victim of ourn an' be jined to 'im in holy mattermony 'bout third drink time

to-morrow mawning. We all seen how 'e hankers arter 'er like she was hot tamales an' yet it's ten to one he don't corral 'er none fer a month onless we look out 'is game fer 'im a hull lot. Why, I've hearn tell as how, out in the States, they sometimes hangs off six weeks 'r two months before they comes to the altar, willin'. Yer see, we c'n put it up to 'er as how we feel thet we've injured 'im a heap an' she must help to make it straight. It might even be a good play, if she looks like she's goin' to buck, to let on as how we're expectin' a horde o' ghastly savages to stampede our camp ter-morrer night an' we feels that low-down about this hangin' that this here sacrifice o' hern is the only thing that'll give us heart to fight. 'O' course we don't say nothin' to the bridegroom till the 'rangements is all made. You see, gents, as how we hev a chance to change a common low-down hangin' into a sassiety nuptials o' the first magnitood, wot'll make every other ranch f'm here to the Big Divide jest green with envy.'

"I hed to stop fer breath, but I couldn't 'a' got no further nohow. The idea took holt o' them fellers 'n' made 'em plumb loony. They jumped up 'n' took holt o' hands 'n' hed a genuwine Sioux war dance. When they got tired 'n' some o' the juice was squeezed out o' their glee, they 'pinted a committee o' five with me fer chairman to tackle the lovely female 'n' corral 'er if possible.

"This shorely let me out a hull lot. You c'n see thet it was a heap different f'm roundin' up a herd o' cattle, 'r takin' a turn in the brandin'-pen; but I was too game to throw down my hand till I hed brought 'er to a show-down, lose 'r win.

"Well, we kep' on thet girl's trail all day tryin' to git a chance to tackle 'er alone an' it want till nigh sun-down thet we caught 'er comin'

round f'm the kitchen. We all offs with our hats and asks her quite smooth if she c'n spare us a minit of her vallyble time. She looks surprised 'n' then sort o' 'mused 'n' 'lows she can if we talks right smart.

"I puts it to her straight as how she 'n' Blake hes been ingaged fer a long time and how we feels bad at havin' injured 'im and must make it up in some way. I puts it to 'er slow 'n' d'lib'rit so's not to startle 'er, fer wimmin is always takin' fright at nothin' and shyin'. I says:

"'An' so, Missis Saunderson, we all hes took it upon ourselves to ask yer, in the name o' jestice 'n' humanity, to help us clear our consciences tetchin' this hangin' by lettin' us send over to the neighborin' reservation 'n' fetch a gospel sharp wot's been infestin' these parts fer some time, 'n' hev 'im marry you 'n' Gris—er—Blake, about third drink time ter-morrer.' When I finishes she gasps:

"'Ter-morrer,' says she, a heap horrified, the idee seems thet new to 'er, spite o' all I done not to make it sudden. I seen she was goin' to get to millin' so I says:

"'Jest one minit, lady. Don't speak too quick. I know it must seem some prompt, this deal o' ourn, but you're on the plains now, 'n' you must remember thet here jestice is swift 'n' rewards is swift. We boys submits it to yer thet, bein' as ye are fur f'm the hants o' civilization, and him a cow-boy, it would be a heap more interestin' an' romantic fer ye to foller the custom o' the plains 'n' finish the hull thing up prompt.'

"She looked up with a quick flush on 'er face. I seen the idee was workin'. She was game, you bet. At last she held out both hands to me and said, half laughin' and half cryin', 'I'll do it,' says she, 'but perhaps Mr. Blake won't be willin',' and she looks mighty roguish.

"'In that case,' says I, some ugly,

'we'll go right on with the hangin'. She give a bright little laugh.

"'I think, perhaps, that won't be necessary,' she says, 'n' runs away to 'er tent.

"O' course her pa 'n' ma is plumb scandalized. Her ma wants to know where her trussoo is, but she answered mighty sassy thet if he didn't want 'er as she was he couldn't hev 'er 't all.

"When we told Blake wot we'd done 'n' how the 'rangements was all complete, he looked fer a minit like he was locoed 'n' I didn't know but we'd hev to stretch 'im arter all, but when the truth o' the hull thing

struck 'im he grabbed my hand 'n' says, says 'e:

"'Boys,' says 'e, 'this 'ere pulls me out o' the bog complete.' 'N' he lit out to find the girl. Quite natch-'rul, too.

I turned to Marden.

"'Now Marden,' says I, 'where's thet gospel sharp? You ride over to the reservation 'n' if he makes a kick you git a rope around 'im 'n' haul 'im in regardless. Don't fergit to tell 'im to bring along 'is hull sasserdotal lay-out, fer this 'ere nuptials is goin' to knock spots off'n all the hangin's in the mem'ry o' livin' man.' , "N' it did."

CHARITY

AN ARAB TRADITION

BY ARTHUR GUITERMAN

WHERE'ER thou goest, angels two
Attend thee, one on either side;
What good or ill thy hands may do
They write on parchment fair and wide.

And hast thou helped the stranger's need
Or fed the poor that seek thy door?—
The Right-hand Scribe records the deed
Not once alone, but ten times o'er.

But hast thou sinned?—That Seraph bright
Restrains the Darker Angel's pen:
"Forbear," he prays, "nor haste to write;
Our Brother may repent.—Amen."



THE YELLOW CLAW

by
Sax Rohmer

Author of *The Insidious Dr. Fu-Manchu*,
The Ten-Thirty Folkestone Express etc.

SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING INSTALMENTS.

[Under the leadership of a mysterious "Mr. King" an opium syndicate has gained a foothold in London. Its agent, Gianapolis, bribes Soames, butler of Henry Leroux, the novelist, to further communication between Mrs. Leroux and the syndicate, whose victim she is. During her absence, another opium fiend, Mrs. Vernon, is murdered in the apartment of Leroux, to whom she is a stranger. In her hand is a scrap of paper bearing the words "Your wife . . ." and " . . . Mr. King." Soames flees in terror. Through a friend, Dr. Cumberly, Leroux discovers that his wife is a victim of Mr. King, for whom the police, aided by Gaston Max, a famous French detective, are searching. Dr. Cumberly promises to introduce Max to Sir Brian Malpas, also addicted to the drug-habit, in the hope thus of locating the Syndicate.

At the studio of Olaf van Noord, Dr. Cumberly's daughter Helen and her friend, Denise Ryland, meet Gianapolis, who greatly admires Helen.]

CHAPTER XXVI

FOUR men sauntered up the grand stair case and entered the huge smoking-room of the Radical Club as Big Ben was chiming the hour of eleven o'clock. Any curious observer who had cared to consult the visitor's book in the hall, wherein the two lines last written were not yet dry, would have found the following entries:

VISITOR
Dr. Bruce. Cumberly
M. Gaston

INTRODUCING
MEMBER
John Exel
Brian Malpas

The smoking-room was fairly full, but a corner near the big open grate had just been vacated, and here, about a round table, the four disposed themselves. Our French acquaintance being in evening dress had perforce confined himself in his sartorial eccentricities to a flowing silk knot in place of the more conventional, neat bow. He was already upon delightfully friendly terms with the frigid Exel and the aristocratic Sir Brian Malpas. Few natures were proof against the geniality of the brilliant Frenchman.

Conversation drifted, derelict,

from one topic to another, now seized by this current of thought, now by that; and M. Gaston Max made no perceptible attempt to steer it in any given direction. But presently:

"I was reading a very entertaining article," said Exel, turning his monocle upon the physician, "in the *Planet* to-day, from the pen of Miss Cumberly; Ah! dealing with Olaf van Noord."

Sir Brian Malpas suddenly became keenly interested.

"You mean in reference to his new picture, 'Our Lady of the Poppies?' " he said.

"Yes," replied Exel; "but I was unaware that you knew van Noord?"

"I do not know him," said Sir Brian, "I should very much like to meet him. But directly the picture is on view to the public I shall certainly subscribe my half-crown."

"My own idea," drawled Exel, "was that Miss Cumberly's article probably was more interesting than the picture or the painter. Her description of the canvas was certainly most vivid; and I, myself, for a moment, experienced an inclination to see the thing. I feel sure,

however, that I should be disappointed."

"I think you are wrong," interposed Cumberly. "Helen is enthusiastic about the picture, and even Miss Ryland, whom you have met and who is a somewhat severe critic, admits that it is out of the ordinary."

Max, who covertly had been watching the face of Sir Brian Malpas, said at this point:

"I would not miss it for anything, after reading Miss Cumberly's account of it. When are you thinking of going to see it, Sir Brian? I might arrange to join you."

"Directly the exhibition is opened," replied the baronet, lapsing again into his dreamy manner. "Ring me up when you are going, and I will join you."

M. Max, by strategy, masterful because it was simple, so arranged matters that at about twelve o'clock he found himself strolling with Sir Brian Malpas toward the latter's chambers in Piccadilly.

It was a clear, fine night, and both gentlemen formed conspicuous figures, Sir Brian because of his unusual height and upright military bearing, and the Frenchman by reason of his picturesque cloak and hat. Up Northumberland Avenue, across Trafalgar Square and so on up to Piccadilly Circus went the two, deep in conversation; until Sir Brian and M. Max turned into the door of a block of chambers.

To the tactful diplomacy of M. Gaston Max, the task of securing from Sir Brian an invitation to step up into his chambers in order to smoke a final cigar was no heavy one. He seated himself in a deep armchair, at the baronet's invitation, and accepted a very fine cigar, contentedly sniffing at the old cognac with the appreciation of a connoisseur, ere holding it under the syphon.

He glanced around the room, not-

ing the character of the ornaments, and looked up at the big book-shelf which was near to him; these rapid inquiries dictated the following remark: "You have lived in China, Sir Brian?"

Sir Brian surveyed him with mild surprise.

"Yes," he replied; "I was for some time at the Embassy in Peking."

His guest nodded, blowing a ring of smoke from his lips and tracing its hazy outline with the lighted end of his cigar.

"I, too, have been in China," he said slowly.

"What, really! I had no idea."

"Yes—I have been in China . . .

M. Gaston grew suddenly deathly pale and his fingers began to twitch alarmingly. He stared before him with wide-opened eyes and began to cough and to choke as if suffocating—dying.

Sir Brian Malpas leaped to his feet with an exclamation of concern. His visitor weakly waved him away, gasping: "It is nothing . . . it will . . . pass off. Oh! *mon dieu!*" . . .

Sir Brian ran and opened one of the windows to admit more air to the apartment. He turned and looked back anxiously at the man in the armchair. M. Gaston, twitching in a pitiful manner and still frightfully pale, was clutching the chair-arms and glaring straight in front of him. Sir Brian started slightly and advanced again to his visitor's side.

The burning cigar lay upon the carpet beside the chair, and Sir Brian took it up and tossed it into the grate. As he did so he looked searchingly into the eyes of M. Gaston. The pupils were extraordinarily dilated . . .

"Do you feel better?" asked Sir Brian.

"Much better," muttered M. Gas-

ton, his face twitching nervously—"much better."

"Are you subject to these attacks?"

"Since—I was in China—yes, unfortunately."

Sir Brian tugged at his fair moustache and seemed about to speak, then turned aside, and, walking to the table, poured out a peg of brandy and offered it to his guest.

"Thanks," said M. Gaston; "many thanks, indeed, but already I recover. There is only one thing that would hasten my recovery, and that, I fear, is not available."

"What is that?"

He looked again at M. Gaston's eyes with their very dilated pupils.

"What! you . . . you . . ."

"Opium!" whispered M. Gaston.

CHAPTER XXVII

"I acquired the custom in China," continued the Frenchman, his voice gradually growing stronger; "and for many years, now, I have regarded opium as essential to my well-being. Unfortunately business has detained me in London, and I have been forced to fast for an unusually long time. My outraged constitution is protesting—that is all."

He shrugged his shoulders and glanced up at his host with an odd smile.

"You have my sympathy," said Sir Brian.

"In Paris," continued the visitor, "I am a member of a select and cosy little club; near the Boulevard Beaumarchais . . ."

"I have heard of it," interjected Malpas—"on the Rue St. Claude?"

"That, indeed, is its situation," replied the other with surprise. "You know someone who is a member?"

Sir Brian Malpas hesitated for ten seconds or more; then, crossing the

room and reclosing the window, he turned, facing his visitor across the large room.

"I was a member, myself, during the time that I lived in Paris," he said, in a hurried manner which did not entirely serve to cover his confusion.

"My dear Sir Brian! We have at least one taste in common!"

Sir Brian Malpas passed his hand across his brow with a weary gesture well-known to fellow Members of Parliament, for it often presaged the abrupt termination of a promising speech.

"I curse the day that I was appointed to Pekin," he said; "for it was in Pekin that I acquired the opium habit. I thought to make it my servant; it has made me . . ."

"What! you would give it up?"

Sir Brian surveyed the speaker with surprise again.

"Do you doubt it?"

"My dear Sir Brian!" cried the Frenchman, now completely restored, "my real life is lived in the land of the poppies; my other life is but a shadow! *Morbleu!* to be an outcast from that garden of bliss is to me torture excruciating. For the past three months I have regularly met in my trances . . ."

Sir Brian shuddered coldly.

"In my explorations of that wonderland," continued the Frenchman, "a most fascinating Eastern girl. Ah! I cannot describe her; for when, at a time like this, I seek to conjure up her image—*nom d'un nom!* do you know, I can think of nothing but a serpent!"

"A serpent!"

"A serpent, exactly. Yet, when I actually meet her in the land of the poppies, she is a dusky Cleopatra in whose presence I forget the world—even the world of the poppy. We float down the stream together, always in an Indian bark canoe, and

this stream runs through orange groves. Numberless apes—millions of apes, inhabit these groves, and as we two float along, they hurl orange blossoms—orange blossoms, you understand—until the canoe is filled with them. I assure you, monsieur, that I perform these delightful journeys regularly, and to be deprived of the key which opens the gate of this wonderland, is to me like being exiled from a loved one. *Pardieu!* that grove of the apes! *Morbleu!* my witch of the dusky eyes! Yet, as I have told you, owing to some trick of my brain, whilst I can experience an intense longing for that companion of my dreams, my waking attempts to visualize her provide nothing but the image . . ."

"Of a serpent," concluded Sir Brian, smiling pathetically. "You are indeed, an enthusiast, M. Gaston, and to me a new type. I had supposed that every slave of the drug cursed his servitude and loathed and despised himself . . ."

"Ah, monsieur! to *me* those words sound almost like a sacrilege!"

"But," continued Sir Brian, "your remarks interest me strangely; for two reasons. First, they confirm your assertion that you are, or were, an habitué of the Rue St. Claude, and secondly, they revive in my mind an old fancy—a superstition."

"What is that, Sir Brian?" inquired M. Max, whose opium vision was a faithful imitation of one related to him by an actual frequenter of the establishment near the Boulevard Beaumarchais.

"Only once before, M. Gaston, have I compared notes with a fellow opium-smoker, and he, also, was a patron of Madame Jean; he, also, met in his dreams that Eastern Circe, in the grove of apes, just as I . . ."

"*Morbleu!* Yes?"

"As I meet her!"

"But this is astounding!" cried

Max, who actually thought it so. "Your fancy—your superstition—was this: that only habitués of Rue St. Claude met, in poppyland, this vision? And in your fancy you are now confirmed?"

"It is singular, at least."

"It is more than that, Sir Brian! Can it be that some intelligence presides over that establishment and exercises—shall I call it a hypnotic influence upon the inmates?"

M. Max put the question with sincere interest.

"One does not *always* meet her," murmured Sir Brian. "But—yes, it is possible. For I have since renewed those experiences in London."

"What! in London?"

"Are you remaining for some time longer in London?"

"Alas! for several weeks yet."

"Then I will introduce you to a gentleman who can secure you admission to an establishment in London—where you may even hope sometimes to find the orange grove—to meet your dream-bride!"

"What!" cried M. Gaston, rising to his feet, his eyes bright with gratitude, "You will do that?"

"With pleasure," said Sir Brian Malpas, wearily; "nor am I jealous! But—no! do not thank me, for I do not share your views upon the subject, monsieur. You are a devout worshipper; I, an unhappy slave!"

CHAPTER XXVIII

Into the Palm Court of the Hotel Astoria Mr. Gianapolis came, radiant and bowing. M. Gaston rose to greet his visitor. M. Gaston was arrayed in a light gray suit and wore a violet tie of very chaste design; his complexion had assumed a quality of sallowness, and the pupils of his eyes had acquired (as on the occasion of his visit to the chambers of Sir Brian Malpas) a *chatoyant* quality; they alternately dilated and con-

tracted in a most remarkable manner—in a manner which attracted the immediate attention of Mr. Gianapolis.

"My dear sir," he said, speaking in French, "you suffer. I perceive how grievously you suffer; and you have been denied that panacea which beneficent nature designed for the service of mankind. A certain gentleman known to both of us (we brethren of the poppy are all nameless) has advised me of your requirements—and here I am."

"You are welcome," declared M. Gaston.

He rose and grasped eagerly the hand of the Greek, at the same time looking about the Palm Court suspiciously. "You can relieve my sufferings?"

Mr. Gianapolis seated himself beside the Frenchman. "You knew Madame Jean?" he asked.

"The dear Madame Jean! Name of a name! She was the hierophant of my Paris Temple . . ."

"And, Sen?"

"Our excellent Sen! My dear sir, it was from the hands of the worthy Sen, the incomparable Sen, that I received the key to the gate! Ah! how I have suffered since the accursed business has exiled me from the . . ."

"I feel for you," declared Gianapolis, warmly; "I, too, have worshiped at the shrine; and although I cannot promise that the London establishment to which I shall introduce you, is comparable with that over which Madame Jean formerly presided . . ."

"Formerly?" exclaimed M. Gaston, with lifted eyebrows. "You do not tell me . . ."

"My friend," said Gianapolis, "in Europe we are less enlightened upon certain matters than in Smyrna, in Constantinople—in Cairo. The impertinent police have closed the es-

tablishment in the Rue St. Claude!"

"Ah!" exclaimed M. Gaston, striking his brow, "misery! I shall return to Paris, then, only to die?"

"I would suggest, monsieur," said Gianapolis, tapping him confidentially upon the breast, "that you periodically visit London in future. The journey is a short one, and already, I am happy to say, the London establishment (conducted by Mr. Ho-Pin of Canton—a most accomplished gentleman, and a graduate of London)—enjoys the patronage of several distinguished citizens of Paris, of Brussels, of Vienna, and elsewhere."

"You offer me life!" declared M. Gaston, gratefully. "The commoner establishments, for the convenience of sailors and others of that class, at Dieppe, Calais,"—he shrugged his shoulders, comprehensively—"are impossible as resorts. In catering for the true devotees—for those who seek to explore the ultimate regions of poppyland, for those who have learned the mystery from the real masters in Asia and not in Europe—the enterprise conducted by Madame Jean supplied a want long and bitterly experienced. I rejoice to know that London has not been neglected . . ."

"My dear friend!" cried Gianapolis enthusiastically, "No important city has been neglected! A high priest of the cult has arisen, and from a parent lodge in Pekin he has extended his offices to kindred lodges in most of the capitals of Europe and of Asia; he has not neglected the Near East, and America owes him a national debt of gratitude."

"Ah! the great man!" murmured M. Gaston, with closed eyes. "As an old habitue of the Rue St. Claude, I divine that you refer to Mr. King?"

"Beyond doubt," whispered Gianapolis, imparting a quality of awe to

his voice. "From you, my friend, I will have no secrets; but"—he glanced about him crookedly, and lowered his voice to an impressive whisper—"the police, as you are aware . . ."

"Curse their interference!" said M. Gaston.

"Curse it indeed; but the police persist in believing, or in pretending to believe, that any establishment patronized by lovers of the magic resin must necessarily be a resort of criminals."

"Pah!"

"Whilst this absurd state of affairs prevails, it is advisable, it is more than advisable, it is imperative, that all of us should be secret. The . . . raid—unpleasant word!—upon the establishment in Paris—was so unexpected that there was no time to advise patrons; but the admirable tact of the French authorities ensured the suppression of all names. Since—always as a protective measure—no business relationship exists between any two of Mr. King's establishments (each one being entirely self-governed) some difficulty is being experienced, I believe, in obtaining the names of those who patronized Madame Jean. But I am doubly glad to have met you, M. Gaston, for not only can I put you in touch with the London establishment, but I can impress upon you the necessity of preserving absolute silence . . ."

M. Gaston extended his palms eloquently.

"To me," he declared, "the name of Mr. King is a sacred symbol."

"It is to all of us!" responded the Greek, devoutly.

M. Gaston in turn became confidential, bending toward Gianapolis so that, as the shadow of the Greek fell upon his face, his pupils contracted cat-like.

"How often have I prayed," he

whispered, "for a sight of that remarkable man!"

A look of horror, real or simulated, appeared upon the countenance of Gianapolis.

"To see—Mr. King!" he breathed. "My dear friend, I declare to you by all that I hold sacred that I—though one of the earliest patrons of the first establishment, that in Pekin—have never seen Mr. King!"

"He is so cautious and so clever as that?"

"Even as cautious and even as clever—yes. Though every branch of the enterprise in the world were destroyed, no man would ever see Mr. King; he would remain but a *name*!"

"You will arrange for me to visit the house of—Ho-Pin, did you say?—immediately?"

"To-day, if you wish," said Gianapolis, brightly.

"My funds," continued M. Gaston, shrugging his shoulders, "are not limitless at the moment; and until I receive a remittance from Paris . . ."

The brow of Mr. Gianapolis darkened slightly.

"Our clientele, here," he replied, "is a very wealthy one, and the fees are slightly higher than in Paris. An entrance fee of fifty guineas is charged, and an annual subscription of the same amount . . ."

"But," exclaimed M. Gaston, "I shall not be in London for so long as a year! In a week or a fortnight from now, I shall be on my way to America!"

"You will receive an introduction to the New York representative, and your membership will be available for any of the United States establishments."

"But I am going to South America."

"At Buenos Aires is one of the largest branches."

"But I am not going to Buenos Aires. I am going with a prospecting party to Yucatan."

"You must be well aware, monsieur, that to go to Yucatan is to exile yourself from all that life holds for you."

"I can take a supply . . ."

"You will die, monsieur! Already you suffer abominably . . ."

"I do not suffer because of any lack of the specific," said M. Gaston wearily; "for if I were entirely unable to obtain possession of it, I should most certainly die. But I suffer because, living as I do at present in a public hotel, I am unable to embark upon a protracted voyage into those realms which hold so much for me . . ."

"I offer you the means . . ."

"But to charge me one hundred guineas, since I cannot possibly avail myself of the full privileges, is to rob me—is to trade upon my condition!"—M. Gaston was feebly indignant.

"Let it be twenty-five guineas, monsieur," said the Greek, reflectively, "entitling you to two visits."

"Good! good!" cried M. Gaston. "Shall I write you a check?"

"You mistake me," said Gianapolis. "I am in no way connected with the management of the establishment. You will settle this business matter with Mr. Ho-Pin . . ."

"Yes, yes!"

"To whom I will introduce you this evening. Checks, as you must be aware, are unacceptable. I will meet you at Piccadilly Circus, outside the entrance to the London Pavilion, at nine o'clock this evening, and you will bring with you the twenty-five guineas in cash. You will arrange to absent yourself during the following day?"

"Of course, of course. At nine o'clock at Piccadilly Circus?"

"Exactly."

M. Gaston, this business satisfactorily completed, made his way to his own room by a somewhat devious route, not wishing to encounter any one of his numerous acquaintances whilst in an apparent state of ill-health so calculated to excite compassion. He avoided the lift and ascended the many stairs to his small apartment.

Here, he rectified the sallowness of his complexion, which was due, not to outraged nature, but to the arts of make-up. His dilated pupils (a phenomenon traceable to drops of belladonna) he was compelled to suffer for the present; but since their condition tended temporarily to impair his sight, he determined to remain in his room until the time for the appointment with Gianapolis.

"So!" he muttered—"we have branches in Europe, Asia, Africa and America! *Eh, bien!* to find all those would occupy five hundred detectives for a whole year. I have a better plan: crush the spider and the winds of heaven will disperse his web!"

CHAPTER XXIX

He seated himself in a cane arm-chair, and, whilst the facts were fresh in his memory, made elaborate notes upon the recent conversation with the Greek. He had achieved almost more than he could have hoped for; but, knowing something of the elaborate organization of the opium group, he recognized that he owed some part of his information to the sense of security which this admirably conducted machine inspired in its mechanics. The introduction from Sir Brian Malpas had worked wonders, without doubt; and his own intimate knowledge of the establishment adjoining the Boulevard Beaumarchais, far from arousing the suspicions of Gianapolis, had evidently strengthened the latter's

conviction that he had to deal with a confirmed opium slave.

The French detective congratulated himself upon the completeness of his Paris operation. It was evident that the French police had succeeded in suppressing all communication between the detained members of the Rue St. Claude den, and the head office—which he shrewdly suspected to be situated in London. So confident were the group in the self-contained properties of each of their branches that the raid of any one establishment meant for them nothing more than a temporary financial loss. Failing the clue supplied by the draft on Paris, the case, so far as he was concerned, indeed, must have terminated with the raiding of the opium house. He reflected that he owed that precious discovery primarily to the promptness with which he had conducted the raid—to the finding of the letter (the *one* incriminating letter) from Mr. King.

Evidently the group remained in ignorance of the fact that the little arrangement at the Crédit Lyonnais had been discovered.

He partook of a light dinner in his own room, and having changed into evening dress, went out to meet Mr. Gianapolis. The latter was on the spot punctually at nine o'clock, and taking the Frenchman familiarly by the arm, he hailed a taxi-cab, giving the man the directions: "To Victoria-Suburban." Then, turning to his companion, he whispered: "Evening dress? And you must return in daylight."

M. Max felt himself to be flushing like a girl. It was an error of artistry that he had committed; a heinous crime!

"So silly of me!" he muttered.

"No matter," replied the Greek, genially.

The cab started. M. Max, though silently reproaching himself, made

mental notes of the destination. He had not renewed his sallow complexion, for reasons of his own, and his dilated pupils were beginning to contract again, facts which were not very evident, however, in the poor light. He was very twitchy, nevertheless, and the face of the man beside him was that of a sympathetic vulture, if such a creature can be imagined. He inquired casually if the new patron had brought his money with him, but for the most part his conversation turned upon China, with which country he seemed to be well acquainted. Arrived at Victoria, Mr. Gianapolis discharged the cab, and again taking the Frenchman by the arm, walked with him some twenty paces away from the station. A car suddenly pulled up almost beside them.

Ere M. Max had time to note those details in which he was most interested, Gianapolis had opened the door of the limousine, and the Frenchman found himself within, beside Gianapolis, and behind drawn blinds, speeding he knew not in what direction!

"I suppose I should apologize, my dear M. Gaston," said the Greek; and, although unable to see him, for there was little light in the car, M. Max seemed to *feel* him smiling—"but this little device has proved so useful hitherto. In the event of any of those troubles—wretched police interferences—arising, and of officious people obtaining possession of a patron's name, he is spared the necessity of perjuring himself in any way . . ."

"Perhaps I do not entirely understand you, monsieur?" said M. Max.

"It is so simple. The police are determined to raid one of our establishments; they adopt the course of tracking an *habitué*. This is not impossible. They question him; they ask, 'Do you know a Mr. King?' He

replies that he knows no such person, has never seen, has never spoken with him! I assure you that official inquiries have gone thus far already, in New York, for example; but to what end? They say, 'Where is the establishment of a Mr. King to which you have gone on such and such an occasion? He replies with perfect truth, 'I do not know.' Believe me this little device is quite in your own interest, M. Gaston."

"But when again I feel myself compelled to resort to the solace of the pipe, how then?"

"So simple! You will step to the telephone and ask for this number: East 18642. You will then ask for Mr. King, and an appointment will be made; I will meet you as I met you this evening—and all will be well."

M. Max began to perceive that he had to deal with a scheme even more elaborate than hitherto he had conjectured. Those were very clever people, and through the whole complicated network, as, through the petal of a poppy one may trace the veins, he traced the guiding will—the power of a tortuous Eastern mind. The system was truly Chinese in its elaborate, uncanny mystifications.

In some covered place that was very dark, the car stopped, and Gianapolis, leaping out with agility, assisted M. Max to descend.

This was a covered courtyard, only lighted by the head-lamps of the limousine.

"Take my hand," directed the Greek.

M. Max complied, and was conducted through a low doorway and on to descending steps.

Dimly, he heard the gear of the car reversed, and knew that the limousine was backing out from the courtyard. The door behind him was closed, and he heard no more.

A very dim light shone out below.

He descended, walking more confidently now that the way was visible. A moment later he stood upon the threshold of an apartment which calls for no further description at this place; he stood in the doorway of the incredible, unforgettable cave of the golden dragon; he looked into the beetle eyes of Ho-Pin!

Ho-Pin bowed before him, smiling his mirthless smile. In his left hand he held an amber cigarette tube in which a cigarette smoldered gently, sending up a gray pencil of smoke into the breathless, perfumed air.

"Mr. Ho-Pin," said Gianapolis, indicating the Chinaman, "who will attend to your requirements. This is our new friend from Paris, introduced by Sir B. M.—M. Gaston."

"You are vewry welcome," said the Chinaman in his monotonous, metallic voice. "I understand that a fee of twenty-five guineas"—he bowed again, still smiling.

The visitor took out his pocket-book and laid five notes, one sovereign, and two half-crowns upon a little ebony table beside him. Ho-Pin bowed again and waved his hand toward the lemon-colored door on the left.

"Good-night, M. Gaston!" said Gianapolis in radiant benediction.

"Au revoir, monsieur!"

M. Max followed Ho-Pin to Block A and was conducted to a room at the extreme right of the matting-lined corridor. He glanced about it curiously.

"If you will pwprepare for your flight into the subliminal," said Ho-Pin, bowing in the doorway, "I shall pwresently wreturn with your wings."

In the cave of the golden dragon, Gianapolis sat smoking upon one of the divans. The silence of the place was extraordinary; unnatural, in the very heart of busy commercial Lon-

don. Ho-Pin reappeared and standing in the open doorway of Block A sharply clapped his hands three times.

Said, the Egyptian, came out of the door at the further end of the place, bearing a brass tray upon which were a little brass lamp of Oriental manufacture wherein burned a blue spirituous flame, a Japanese, lacquered box not much larger than a snuff-box, and a long and most curiously carved pipe of wood inlaid with metal and having a metal bowl. Bearing this, he crossed the room, passed Ho-Pin, and entered the corridor beyond.

"You have, of course, put him in the observation room?" said Gianapolis.

Ho-Pin regarded the speaker unemotionally.

"Assuredly," he replied; "for since he visits us for the first time, Mr. King will wish to see him . . ."

A faint shadow momentarily crossed the swarthy face of the Greek, at mention of that name—*Mr. King*. The servants of Mr. King, from the highest to the lowest, served him for gain . . . and from fear.

CHAPTER XXX

Utter silence had claimed again the cave of the golden dragon. Gianapolis sat alone in the place, smoking a cigarette, and gazing crookedly at the image on the ivory pedestal. Then, glancing at his wrist-watch, he stood up, and, stepping to the entrance door, was about to open it . . .

"Ah, so! You go—already?"—

Gianapolis started back as though he had put his foot upon a viper, and turned.

The Eurasian, wearing her yellow, Chinese dress, and with a red poppy in her hair, stood watching him through half-shut eyes, slowly

waving her little fan before her face. Gianapolis attempted the radiant smile, but its brilliancy was somewhat forced, to-night.

"Yes, I must be off," he said hurriedly; "I have to see someone—a future client, I think!"

"A future client—yes!"—the long black eyes were almost closed entirely now. "Who is it—this future client, that you have to see?"

"My dear Mahâra! How odd of you to ask that . . ."

"It is odd of me?—so! . . . It is odd of me that I thinking to wonder why you always running away from me now?"

"Run away from you! My dear little Mahâra!"—He approached the dusky beauty with a certain timidity as one might seek to caress a tiger-cat—"surely you know . . ."

She struck down his hand with a sharp blow of her closed fan, darting at him a look from the brilliant eyes which was a living flame.

Resting one hand upon her hip, she stood with her right foot thrust forward from beneath the yellow robe and pivoting upon the heel of its little slipper. Her head tilted, she watched him through lowered lashes.

"It was not so with you in Moulmein," she said, her silvery voice lowered caressingly. "Do you remember with me a night beside the Irawaddi?—where was that I wonder? Was it in Prome?—Perhaps, yes? . . .—you threatened me to leap in, if . . . and I think to believe you!—I believing you!"

"Mahâra!" cried Gianapolis, and sought to seize her in his arms.

Again she struck down his hand with the little fan, watching him continuously and with no change of expression. But the smoldering fire in those eyes told of a greater flame which consumed her slender body and was potent enough to consume many a victim upon its altar. Gian-

apolis' yellow skin assumed a faintly mottled appearance.

"Whatever is the matter?" he inquired, plaintively.

"So you must be off—yes? I hear you say it; I asking you who to meet?"

"Why do you speak in English?" said Gianapolis with a faint irritation. "Let us talk . . ."

She struck him lightly on the face with her fan; but he clenched his teeth and suppressed an ugly exclamation.

"Who was it?" she asked, musically, "that say to me 'to hear you speaking English—like rippling water?'"

"You are mad!" muttered Gianapolis, beginning to drill the points of his moustache as was his manner in moments of agitation. His crooked eyes were fixed upon the face of the girl. "You go too far."

"Be watching, my friend, that you also go not too far."

The tones were silvery as ever, but the menace unmistakable. Gianapolis forced a harsh laugh and brushed up his moustache furiously.

"What are you driving at?" he demanded, with some return of self-confidence. "Am I to be treated to another exhibition of your insane jealousies?"

"Ah!" The girl's eyes opened widely; she darted another venomous glance at him. "I am sure, now, I am sure!"

"My dear Mahâra, you talk nonsense!"

"Ah!"

She glided sinuously toward him, still with one hand resting upon her hip, stood almost touching his shoulder and raised her beautiful, wicked face to his, peering at him through half-closed eyes, and resting the hand which grasped the fan lightly upon his arm.

"You think I do not see? You

think I do not watch?"—softer and softer grew the silvery voice—"at Olaf van Noord's studio you think I do not hear? Perhaps you not thinking to care if I see and hear—for it seem you not seeing nor hearing *me*. I watch and I see. Is it her so soft brown hair? That color of hair, is so more prettier than ugly black! Is it her English eyes? Eyes that born in the dark forests of Burma, so hideous and so like the eyes of the apes! Is it her white skin and her red cheeks? A brown skin—though someone, there was, that say it is satin of heaven—is so tiresome; when no more it is a new toy it does not interest . . ."

"Really," muttered Gianapolis, uneasily, "I think you must be mad! I don't know what you are talking about."

"Liar!"

One lithe step forward the Eurasian sprang, and, at the word, brought down the fan with all her strength across Gianapolis' eyes!

He staggered away from her, uttering a hoarse cry and instinctively raising his arms to guard himself from further attack; but the girl stood poised again, her hand upon her hip; and swinging her right toe to and fro. Gianapolis, applying his handkerchief to his eyes, squinted at her furiously.

"Liar!" she repeated, and her voice had something of a soothing whisper. "I say to you, be so careful that you go not too far—with me! I do what I do, not because I am a poor fool . . ."

"It's funny," declared Gianapolis, an emotional catch in his voice—"it's damn funny for you—for *you*—to adopt these airs with me! Why! you went to Olaf van . . ."

"Stop!" cried the girl furiously, and sprang at him panther-like, so that he fell back again in confusion, stumbled and collapsed upon a di-

van, with upraised warding arms. "You Greek rat! you skinny Greek rat! Be careful what you think to say to me—to me! to me! Olaf van Noord—the poor, white-faced corpse-man! He is only one of Said's mummies! Be careful what you think to say to me . . . Oh! be careful—be very careful! It is dangerous of any friend of—*Mr. King* . . ."

Gianapolis glanced at her furtively.

"It is dangerous of anyone in a house of—*Mr. King* to think to make attachments," she hissed the words beneath her breath—"outside of ourselves. *Mr. King* would not be glad to hear of it . . . I do not like to tell it to *Mr. King* . . ."

Gianapolis rose to his feet, unsteadily, and stretched out his arms in supplication

"Mahâra!" he said, "don't treat me like this! dear little Mahâra! what have I done to you? Tell me!—only tell me!"

"Shall I tell it in English?" asked the Eurasian softly. Her eyes now were nearly closed; "or does it worry you that I speak so ugly . . ."

"Mahâra! . . ."

"I only say, be so very careful."

He made a final, bold attempt to throw his arms about her, but she slipped from his grasp and ran lightly across the room.

"Go! hurry off!" she said, bending forward and pointing at him with her fan, her eyes widely opened and blazing—"but remember—there is danger! There is Said, who creeps silently, like the jackal . . ."

She opened the ebony door and darted into the corridor beyond, closing the door behind her.

Gianapolis looked about him in a dazed manner, and yet again applied his handkerchief to his stinging eyes. Whoever could have seen him now, must have failed to recognize the

radiant Gianapolis so well known in Bohemian society, the Gianapolis about whom floated a halo of mystery, but who at all times was such a good fellow and so debonair. He took up his hat and gloves, turned, and resolutely strode to the door. Once he glanced back over his shoulder, but shrugged with a sort of self-contempt, and ascended to the top of the steps.

With a key which he selected from a large bunch in his pocket, he opened the door, and stepped out into the garage, carefully closing the door behind him. An electric pocket-lamp served him with sufficient light to find his way out into the lane, and very shortly he was proceeding along Limehouse Causeway. At the moment, indignation was the major emotion ruling his mind; he resented the form which his anger assumed, for it was a passion of rebellion, and rebellion is only possible in servants. It is the part of a slave resenting the lash. He was an unscrupulous, immoral man, not lacking in courage of a sort; and upon the conquest of Mahâra, the visible mouthpiece of *Mr. King*, he had entered in much the same spirit as that actuating a Kanaka who dives for pearls in a shark-infested lagoon. He had sought a slave, and lo! the slave was become the master! Otherwise whence this spirit of rebellion . . . this fear?

He occupied himself with such profitless reflections up to the time that he came to the electric tram; but, from thence onward, his mind became otherwise engaged. On his way to Piccadilly Circus that same evening, he had chanced to find himself upon a crowded pavement walking immediately behind Denise Ryland and Helen Cumberly. His esthetic, Greek soul had been fired at first sight of the beauty of the lat-

ter; and now, his heart had leaped ecstatically. His first impulse, of course, had been to join the two ladies; but Gianapolis had trained himself to suspect all impulses.

Therefore he had drawn near—near enough to overhear their conversation without proclaiming himself. What he had learned by this eavesdropping he counted of peculiar value.

Helen Cumberly was arranging to dine with her friend at the latter's hotel that evening. "But I want to be home early," he had heard the girl say, "so if I leave you at about ten o'clock I can walk to Palace Mansions. No! you need not come with me; I enjoy a lonely walk through the streets of London in the evening . . ."

Gianapolis registered a mental vow that Helen's walk should not be a lonely one. He did not flatter himself upon the possession of a pleasing exterior, but, from experience, he knew that with women he had a winning way.

Now, his mind aglow with roseate possibilities, he stepped from the tram in the neighborhood of Shore-ditch, and chartered a taxi-cab. From this he descended at the corner of Arundel Street and strolled along westward in the direction of the hotel patronized by Miss Ryland. At a corner from which he could command a view of the entrance, he paused and consulted his watch.

It was nearly twenty minutes past ten. Mentally, he cursed Mahāra, who perhaps had caused him to let slip this golden opportunity. But his was not a character easily discouraged; he lighted a cigarette and prepared himself to wait, in the hope that the girl had not yet left her friend.

His vigil lasted but a quarter of an hour. At twenty-five minutes to

eleven, Helen Cumberly came running down the steps of the hotel and hurried toward the Strand. Like a shadow, Gianapolis, throwing away a half-smoked cigarette, glided around the corner, paused and so timed his return that he literally ran into the girl as she entered the main thoroughfare.

He started back.

"Why!" he cried, "Miss Cumberly!"

Helen checked a frown, and hastily substituted a smile.

"How odd that I should meet you here, Mr. Gianapolis," she said.

"Most extraordinary! I was on my way to visit a friend in Victoria Street upon a rather urgent matter. May I venture to hope that your path lies in a similar direction?"

"Yes," she said, hesitatingly; "but—I fear I am detaining you . . ."

"Oh, my dear Miss Cumberly!" cried Gianapolis, beaming radiantly, "it is a greater pleasure than I can express to you, and then for two friends who are proceeding in the same direction to walk apart would be quite absurd, would it not?"

The term "friend" was not pleasing to Helen's ears. Mr. Gianapolis went far too fast. But she recognized her helplessness, and accepted this cavalier with as good a grace as possible.

He immediately began to talk of Olaf van Noord and his pictures, whilst Helen hurried along as though her life depended upon her speed. Sometimes, on the pretence of piloting her at crossings, Gianapolis would take her arm; and this contact she found most disagreeable; but on the whole his conduct was respectful to the point of servility.

A pretty woman who is not wholly obsessed by her personal charms, learns more of the ways of mankind than it is vouchsafed to her plainer sister ever to know; and in the

crooked eyes of Gianapolis, Helen Cumberly read a world of unuttered things, and drew her own conclusions. These several conclusions dictated a single course; avoidance of Gianapolis in future.

Fortunately, Helen Cumberly's self-chosen path in life had taught her how to handle the nascent and undesirable lover. She chatted upon the subject of art, and fenced adroitly whenever the Greek sought to introduce the slightest personal element into the conversation. Nevertheless, she was relieved when at last she found herself in the familiar Square with her foot upon the steps of Palace Mansions.

"Good night, Mr. Gianapolis!" she said, and frankly offered her hand.

The Greek raised it to his lips with exaggerated courtesy, and retained it, looking into her eyes in his crooked fashion.

"We both move in the world of art and letters; may I hope that this meeting will not be our last?"

"I am always wandering about between Fleet Street and Soho," laughed Helen. "It is quite certain we shall run into each other again before long. Good night, and thank you so much!"

She darted into the hallway, and ran lightly up the stairs. Opening the flat door with her key, she entered and closed it behind her, sighing with relief to be free of the over-attentive Greek. Some impulse prompted her to enter her own room, and, without turning up the light, to peer down into the Square.

Gianapolis was descending the steps. On the pavement he stood and looked up at the windows, lingeringly; then he turned and walked away.

Helen Cumberly stifled an exclamation.

As the Greek gained the corner of the Square and was lost from

view, a lithe figure—kin of the shadows which had masked it—became detached from the other shadows beneath the trees of the central garden and stood, a vague silhouette, seemingly looking up at her window as Gianapolis had looked.

Helen leaned her hands upon the ledge and peered intently down. The figure was a vague blur in the darkness, but it was moving away along by the rails . . . following Gianapolis. No clear glimpse she had of it, for bat-like, it avoided the light, this sinister shape—and was gone.

CHAPTER XXXI

It is time to rejoin M. Gaston Max in the catacombs of Ho-Pin. Having prepared himself for drugged repose in the small but luxurious apartment to which he had been conducted by the Chinaman, he awaited with interest the next development. This took the form of the arrival of an Egyptian attendant, white-robed, red-slippered, and wearing the inevitable tarboosh. Upon the brass tray which he carried were arranged the necessities of the opium smoke. Placing the tray upon a little table beside the bed, he extracted from the lacquered box a piece of gummy substance upon the end of a long needle. This he twisted around, skilfully, in the lamp flame until it acquired a blue spirituous flame of its own. He dropped it into the bowl of the carved pipe and silently placed the pipe in M. Max's hand.

Max, with simulated eagerness, rested the mouthpiece between his lips and *exhaled* rapturously.

Said stood watching him, without the slightest expression of interest being perceptible upon his immobile face. For some time the Frenchman made pretence of inhaling, gently, the potent vapor, lying propped upon

one elbow; then, allowing his head gradually to droop, he closed his eyes and lay back upon the silken pillow.

Once more he exhaled feebly ere permitting the pipe to drop from his listless grasp. The mouthpiece yet rested between his lips, but the lower lip was beginning to droop. Finally the pipe slipped through his fingers on to the rich carpet, and he lay inert, head thrown back, and revealing his lower teeth. The nauseating fumes of opium loaded the atmosphere.

Said silently picked up the pipe, placed it upon the tray and retired, closing the door in the same noiseless manner that characterized all his movements.

For a time, M. Max lay inert, glancing about the place through the veil of his lashes. He perceived no evidence of surveillance, therefore he ventured fully to open his eyes; but he did not move his head.

With the skill in summarizing detail at a glance which contributed largely to make him the great, criminal investigator that he was, he noted those particulars which at an earlier time had occasioned the astonishment of Soames.

M. Max was too deeply versed in his art to attempt any further investigations, yet; he contented himself with learning as much as was possible without moving in any way; and whilst he lay there awaiting whatever might come, the door opened noiselessly—to admit Ho-Pin.

He was about to be submitted to a supreme test, for which, however, he was not unprepared. He lay with closed eyes, breathing nasally.

Ho-Pin, his face a smiling, mirthless mask, bent over the bed. Adeptly, he seized the right eyelid of M. Max, and rolled it back over his forefinger, disclosing the eyeball.

M. Max, anticipating this test of the genuineness of his coma, had rolled up his eyes at the moment of Ho-Pin's approach, so that now only the white of the sclerotic showed. His trained nerves did not betray him. He lay like a dead man never flinching.

Ho-Pin, releasing the eyelid, muttered something gutturally, and stole away from the bed as silently as he had approached it. Very methodically he commenced to search through M. Max's effects, commencing with the discarded garments. He examined the maker's marks upon these, and scrutinized the buttons closely. He turned out all the pockets, counted the contents of the purse, and of the notecase, examined the name inside M. Max's hat, and explored the lining in a manner which aroused the detective's professional admiration. Watch and pocket-knife, Ho-Pin inspected with interest. The little hand-bag which M. Max had brought with him, containing a few toilet necessities, was overhauled religiously. So much the detective observed through his lowered lashes.

Then Ho-Pin again approached the bed and M. Max became again a dead man.

The silken pajamas which the detective wore were subjected to gentle examination by the sensitive fingers of the Chinaman, and those same fingers crept beetle-like beneath the pillow.

Silently, Ho-Pin stole from the room and silently closed the door.

M. Max permitted himself a long breath of relief. It was an ordeal through which few men could have passed triumphant.

The *silence* of the place next attracted the inquirer's attention. He had noted this silence at the moment that he entered the cave of the golden dragon, but here it was even

more marked; so that he divined, even before he had examined the walls, that the apartment was rendered sound-proof in the manner of a public telephone cabinet. It was a significant circumstance to which he allotted its full value.

But the question uppermost in his mind at the moment was this: Was the time come yet to commence his explorations?

Patience was included in his complement, and, knowing that he had the night before him, he preferred to wait.

The shaded lamp was swung in such a position that most of the light was directed upon him where he lay, whilst the walls of the room were bathed in a purple shadow. Behind him and above him, directly over the head of the bunk, a faint sound—a sound inaudible except in such a dead silence as that prevailing—told of some shutter being raised or opened. He had trained himself to watch beneath lowered lids without betraying that he was doing so by the slightest nervous twitching. Now, as he watched the purple-shaded lamp above him, he observed that it was swaying and moving very gently, whereas hitherto it had floated motionless in the still air.

No other sound came to guide him, and to have glanced upward would have been to betray all.

For the second time that night he became aware of one who watched him, became conscious of observation without the guaranty of his physical senses. And beneath this new surveillance, there grew up such a revulsion of his inner being as he had rarely experienced. The perfume of *roses* became perceptible; and somehow its fragrance *disgusted*.

It was as though a faint draught from the opened shutter poured into the apartment an impalpable cloud of evil.

Some sinister and definitely malignant intelligence was focused upon him; or was this a chimera of his imagination? Could it be that now he was become *en rapport* with the thought-forms created in that chamber by its successive occupants?

Scores, perhaps hundreds, of brains had there partaken of the unholy sacrament of opium; thousands, millions of evil carnivals had trailed in impish procession about that bed. He knew enough of the creative power of thought to be aware that a sensitive mind coming into contact with such an atmosphere could not fail to respond in some degree to the suggestions, to the elemental hypnosis, of the place.

Was he owing to his self-induced receptivity of mind—redreaming the evil dreams of those who had occupied that bed before him?

It might be so, but, whatever the explanation, he found himself unable to shake off that uncanny sensation of being watched, studied, by a powerful and inimical intelligence.

Mr. King! . . . *Mr. King!* was watching him!

The director of that group whose structure was founded upon the wreckage of human souls, was watching him!

The lamp swung gently to and fro, turning slowly to the right and then revolving again to the left, giving life in its gyrations to the intermingled figures on the walls. The atmosphere of the room was nauseating; it was beginning to overpower him . . .

The faint clicking sound was repeated.

Beads of perspiration stood upon M. Max's forehead; his imagination had been running away with him. God! this was a house of fear! He controlled himself, but only by dint of a tremendous effort of will.

Stealthily watching the lamp, he

saw that the arc described by its gyrations was diminishing with each successive swing, and, as he watched, its movements grew slighter and slighter, until finally it became quite stationary again, floating, purple and motionless, upon the stagnant air.

Very slowly, he ventured to change his position, for his long ordeal was beginning to induce cramp. The faint creaking of the metal bunk seemed, in the dead stillness and to his highly-tensed senses like the rattling of castanets.

For ten minutes he lay in his new position; then moved slightly again and waited for fully three-quarters of an hour. Nothing happened, and he now determined to proceed with his inquiries.

Sitting upon the edge of the bunk, he looked about him, first directing his attention to that portion of the wall immediately above. So cunningly was the trap contrived that he could find no trace of its existence. Carefully balancing himself upon the rails on either side of the bunk, he stood up and peered closely about that part of the wall from which the sound had seemed to come. He even ran his fingers lightly over the paper, up as high as he could reach; but not the slightest crevice was perceptible. He began to doubt the evidence of his own senses.

Unless his accursed imagination had been playing him tricks, a trap of some kind had been opened above his head and someone had looked in at him; yet—and his fingers were trained to such work—he was prepared to swear that the surface of the Chinese paper covering the wall was perfectly continuous. He drummed upon it lightly with his finger-tips, here and there over the surface above the bed. And in this fashion he became enlightened.

A portion roughly a foot in height

and two feet long, yielded a slightly different note to his drumming, whereby he knew that that part of the paper was not *attached* to the wall. He perceived the truth. The trap, when closed, fitted flush with the back of the wall-paper, and this paper (although when pasted upon the walls it showed no evidence of the fact) must be *transparent*.

From some dark place beyond, it was possible to peer in *through* the rectangular patch of paper as through a window, at the occupant of the bunk below, upon whom the shaded lamp directly poured its rays!

He examined more closely a lower part of the wall, which did not fall within the shadow of the purple lamp-shade; for he was thinking of the draught which had followed the opening of the trap. By this examination he learned two things: The explanation of the draught, and that of a peculiar property possessed by the mural decorations. These (as Soames had observed before him) assumed a new form if one stared at them closely; other figures, figures human and animal, seemed to take shape and to peer out from *behind* the more obvious designs which were perceptible at a glance. The longer and the closer one studied these singular walls, the more evident the *under* design became, until it usurped the field of vision entirely. It was a bewildering delusion; but M. Max had solved the mystery.

There were *two* designs; the first, an intricate Chinese pattern, was painted or printed upon material like the finest gauze. This was attached over a second and vividly colored pattern upon thick parchment-like paper—as he learned by the application of the point of his pocket-knife.

The observation trap was covered with this paper, and fitted so nicely in the opening that his fingers had

failed to detect, through the superimposed gauze, the slightest irregularity there. But, the trap opened, a perfectly clear view of the room could be obtained through the gauze, which, by reason of its texture, also admitted a current of air.

This matter settled, M. Max proceeded carefully to examine the entire room foot by foot. Opening the door in one corner, he entered the bathroom, in which, as in the outer apartment, an electric light was burning. No window was discoverable, and not even an opening for ventilation purposes. The latter fact he might have deduced from the stagnation of the atmosphere.

Half an hour or more he spent in this fashion, without having discovered anything beyond the secret of the observation trap. Again he took out his pocket-knife, which was a large one with a handsome mother-o'-pearl handle. Although Mr. Ho-Pin had examined this carefully, he had solved only half of its secrets. M. Max extracted a little pair of tweezers from the slot in which they were lodged—as Ho-Pin had not neglected to do; but Ho-Pin, having looked at the tweezers, had returned them to their place; M. Max did not do so. He opened the entire knife as though it had been a box, and revealed within it a tiny set of appliances designed principally for the desecration of locks.

Selecting one of these, he took up his watch from the table upon which it lay, and approached the door. It possessed a lever handle of the continental pattern, and M. Max silently prayed that this might not be a snare and a delusion, but that the lock might be of the same manufacture.

In order to settle the point, he held the face of his watch close to the keyhole, wound its knob in the wrong direction, and lo! it became an electric lamp!

One glance he cast into the tiny cavity, then dropped back upon the bunk, twisting his mobile mouth in that half smile at once humorous and despairful.

"Nom d'un p'tit bonhomme!—a Yale!" he muttered. "To open that without noise is impossible! Damn!"

M. Max threw himself back upon the pillow and for an hour afterward lay deep in silent reflection.

He had cigarettes in his case and should have liked to smoke, but feared to take the risk of scenting the air with a perfume so unorthodox.

He had gained something by his exploit, but not all that he had hoped for; clearly his part now was to await what the morning should bring.

CHAPTER XXXII

Morning brought the silent opening of the door, and the entrance of Said, the Egyptian, bearing a tiny, Chinese tea service upon a lacquered tray.

But M. Max lay in a seemingly deathly stupor, and from this the impassive Oriental had great difficulty in arousing him. Said, having shaken some symptoms of life into the limp form of M. Max, filled the little cup with fragrant China tea, and, supporting the dazed man, held the beverage to his lips. With his eyes but slightly opened, and with all his weight resting upon the arm of the Egyptian, he gulped the hot tea, and noted that it was of exquisite quality.

Theine is an antidote to opium, and M. Max accordingly became somewhat restored, and lay staring at the Oriental, and blinking his eyes foolishly.

Said, leaving the tea service upon the little table, glided from the room. Something else the Egyptian had left

upon the tray in addition to the dainty vessels of porcelain; it was a steel ring containing a dozen or more keys. Most of these keys lay fan-wise and bunched together, but one lay isolated and pointing in an opposite direction. It was a Yale key—the key of the door!

Silently as a shadow, M. Max glided into the bathroom, and silently, swiftly, returned, carrying a cake of soap. Three clear, sharp impressions he secured of the Yale, the soap leaving no trace of the operation upon the metal. He dropped the precious soap tablet into his open bag.

In a state of semi-torpor, M. Max sprawled upon the bed for ten minutes or more, during which time, as he noted, the door remained ajar. Then there entered a figure which seemed wildly out of place in the establishment of Ho-Pin. It was that of a butler, most accurately dressed and most deferential in all his highly-trained movements. His dark hair was neatly brushed, and his face, which had a pinched appearance, was composed in that "if-it-is-entirely-agreeable-to-you-Sir" expression, typical of his class.

The unhealthy, yellow skin of the new arrival, which harmonized so ill with the clear whites of his little furtive eyes, interested M. Max extraordinarily. M. Max was blinking like a week-old kitten, and one could have sworn that he was but hazily conscious of his surroundings; whereas in reality he was memorizing the cranial peculiarities of the new arrival, the shape of his nose, the disposition of his ears; the exact hue of his eyes; the presence of a discolored tooth in his lower jaw, which a fish-like, nervous trick of opening and closing the mouth periodically revealed.

"Good-morning, sir!" said the valet, gently rubbing his palms to-

gether and bending over the bed.

M. Max inhaled deeply, stared in glassy fashion, but in no way indicated that he had heard the words.

The valet shook him gently by the shoulder.

"Good morning, sir. Shall I prepare your bath?"

"She is a serpent!" muttered M. Max, tossing one arm weakly above his head. . . . "all yellow . . . But roses are growing in the mud . . . of the river!"

"If you will take your bath, sir," insisted the man in black, "I shall be ready to shave you when you return."

"Bath . . . shave me!"

M. Max began to rub his eyes and to stare uncomprehendingly at the speaker.

"Yes, sir; good morning, sir,"—there was another bow and more rubbing of palms.

"Ah!—of course! *Morbleu!* This is Paris . . ."

"No, sir, excuse me, sir, London. Bath hot or cold, sir?"

"Cold," replied M. Max, struggling upright with apparent difficulty; "yes—cold."

"Very good, sir. Have you brought your own razor, sir?"

"Yes, yes," muttered Max—"in the bag—in that bag."

"I will fill the bath, sir."

The bath being duly filled, M. Max, throwing about his shoulders a magnificent silk kimono which he found upon the armchair, steered a zig-zag course to the bathroom. His tooth-brush had been put in place by the attentive valet; there was an abundance of clean towels, soaps, bath salts, with other necessities and luxuries of the toilet. M. Max, following his bath, saw fit to evidence a return to mental clarity; and whilst he was being shaved he sought to enter into conversation with the valet. But the latter was singularly reti-

cent, and again M. Max changed his tactics. He perceived here a golden opportunity which he must not allow to slip through his fingers.

"Would you like to earn a hundred pounds?" he demanded abruptly, gazing into the beady eyes of the man bending over him.

Soames almost dropped the razor. His state of alarm was truly pitiable; he glanced to the right, he glanced to the left, he glanced over his shoulder, up at the ceiling, and down at the floor.

"Excuse me, sir," he said, nervously; "I don't think I quite understand you, sir?"

"It is quite simple," replied M. Max. "I asked you if you had some use for a hundred pounds. Because if you have, I will meet you at any place you like to mention and bring with me cash to that amount!"

"Hush, sir!—for God's sake, hush sir!" whispered Soames.

A dew of perspiration was glistening upon his forehead and it was fortunate that he had finished shaving M. Max, for his hand was trembling furiously. He made a pretence of hurrying with towels, bay rum and powder spray, but the beady eyes were ever glancing to right and left and all about.

M. Max, who throughout this time had been reflecting, made a second move.

"Another fifty, or possibly another hundred, could be earned as easily," he said, with assumed carelessness. "I may add that this will not be offered again, and . . . that you will shortly be out of employment, with worse to follow."

Soames began to exhibit signs of collapse.

"Oh, my lord!" he muttered, "what shall I do? I can't promise—I can't promise; but I might—I *might* look in at the 'Three Nuns' on Friday evening about nine o'clock . . ."

He hastily scooped up M. Max's belongings, thrust them into the handbag and closed it. M. Max was now fully dressed and ready to depart. He placed a sovereign in the valet's ready palm.

"That's an appointment," he said, softly.

Said entered and stood bowing in the doorway.

"Good morning, sir, good morning," muttered Soames, and covertly he wiped the perspiration from his brow with the corner of a towel—"good morning, and thank you very much."

M. Max, buttoning his light overcoat in order to conceal the fact that he wore evening dress, entered the corridor, and followed the Egyptian into the cave of the golden dragon. Ho-Pin, sleek and smiling, received him there. Ho-Pin was smoking the inevitable cigarette in the long tube, and, opening the door, he silently led the way up the steps into the covered courtyard, Said following with the handbag. The limousine stood there, dimly visible in the darkness. Said placed the handbag upon the seat inside, and Ho-Pin assisted M. Max to enter, closing the door upon him, but leaning through the open window to shake his hand. The Chinaman's hand was icily cold and limp.

"*Au revoir*, my dear friend," he said in his metallic voice. "I hope to have the pleasure of greeting you again vewry shortly."

With that he pulled up the window from the outside, and the occupant of the limousine found himself in impenetrable darkness; for dark blue blinds covered all the windows. He lay back, endeavoring to determine what should be his next move. The car started with a perfect action, and without the slightest jolt or jar. By reason of the light which suddenly shone in through the chinks of the

blinds, he knew that he was outside the covered courtyard; then he became aware that a sharp turning had been taken to the left, followed almost immediately, by one to the right.

He directed his attention to the blinds.

"Ah! *nom d'un nom!* they are clever—these!"

The blinds worked in little vertical grooves and had each a tiny lock. The blinds covering the glass doors on either side were attached to the adjustable windows; so that when Ho-Pin had raised the window, he had also closed the blind! And these windows operated automatically, and defied all M. Max's efforts to open them!

He was effectively boxed in and unable to form the slightest impression of his surroundings. He threw himself back upon the soft cushions with a muttered curse of vexation; but the mobile mouth was twisted into that wryly humorous smile. Always, M. Max was a philosopher.

At the end of a drive of some twenty-five minutes or less, the car stopped—the door was opened, and the radiant Gianapolis extended both hands to the occupant.

"My dear M. Gaston!" he cried, "how glad I am to see you looking so well! Hand me your bag, I beg of you!"

M. Max placed the bag in the extended hand of Gianapolis, and leaped out upon the pavement.

"This way, my dear friend!" cried the Greek, grasping him warmly by the arm.

The Frenchman found himself being led along toward the head of the car; and, at the same moment, Said reversed the gear and backed away. M. Max was foiled in his hopes of learning the number of the limousine.

He glanced about him wonderingly.

"You are in Temple Gardens, M. Gaston," explained the Greek, "and here, unless I am greatly mistaken, comes a disengaged taxi-cab. You will drive to your hotel?"

"Yes, to my hotel," replied M. Max.

"And whenever you wish to avail yourself of your privilege, and pay a second visit to the establishment presided over by Mr. Ho-Pin, you remember the number?"

"I remember the number," replied M. Max.

The cab hailed by Gianapolis drew up beside the two, and M. Max entered it.

"Good morning, M. Gaston."

"Good morning, Mr. Gianapolis."

CHAPTER XXXIII

And now, Henry Leroux, Denise Ryland and Helen Cumberly were speeding along the Richmond Road beneath a sky which smiled upon Leroux's convalescence; for this was a perfect autumn morning which ordinarily had gladdened him, but which saddened him to-day.

The sun shone and the sky was blue; a pleasant breeze played upon his cheeks; whilst Mira, his wife, was . . .

He knew that he had come perilously near to the borderland beyond which are gibbering mowing things; that he had stood upon the frontier of insanity; and realizing the futility of such reflections, he struggled to banish them from his mind, for his mind was not yet healed—and he must be whole, be sane, if he would take part in the work, which, now, strangers were doing, whilst he—whilst he was a useless hulk.

Denise Ryland had been very volatile at the commencement of the drive, but, as it progressed, had grown gradually silent, and now sat with her brows working up and down and with a little network of wrinkles

alternately appearing and disappearing above the bridge of her nose. A self-reliant woman, it was irksome to her to know herself outside the circle of activity revolving around the mysterious Mr. King. She had had one interview with Inspector Dunbar, merely in order that she might give personal testimony to the fact that Mira Leroux had not visited her that year in Paris. Of the shrewd Scotsman she had formed the poorest opinion; and, indeed, she never had been known to express admiration for, or even the slightest confidence in, any man breathing. The amiable M. Gaston possessed virtues which appealed to her, but whilst she admitted that his conversation was entertaining and his general behavior good, she always spoke with the utmost contempt of his sartorial splendor.

Now, with the days and the weeks slipping by, and with the spectacle before her of poor Leroux, a mere shadow of his former self, with the case, so far as she could perceive, at a standstill, and with the police (she firmly believed) doing "absolutely . . . nothing . . . whatever"—Denise Ryland recognized that what was lacking in the investigation was that intuition and wit which only a clever woman could bring to bear upon it, and of which she, in particular, possessed an unlimited reserve.

The car sped on toward the purer atmosphere of the riverside, and even the clouds of dust, which periodically enveloped them, with the passing of each motor-bus, and which at the commencement of the drive had inspired her to several notable and syncopated outbursts, now left her unmoved.

She thought that at last she perceived the secret working of that Providence which ever dances attendance at the elbow of accom-

plished womankind. Following the lead set by "H. C." in the *Planet* ("H. C." was Helen Cumberly's *nom de plume*) and by Crocket in the *Daily Monitor*, the *London Press* had taken Olaf van Noord to its bosom; and his exhibition in the Little Gallery was an established financial success, whilst "Our Lady of the Poppies" (which had, of course, been rejected by the Royal Academy) promised to be the picture of the year.

Mentally, Denise Ryland was again surveying that remarkable composition; mentally she was surveying Olaf van Noord's model, also. Into the scheme slowly forming in her brain, the yellow-wrapped cigarette containing "a small percentage of opium" fitted likewise. Finally, but not last in importance, the Greek gentleman, Mr. Gianapolis, formed a unit of the whole.

Denise Ryland had always despised those detective creations which abound in French literature; perceiving in their marvelous deductions a tortured logic incompatible with the classic models. She prided herself upon her logic, possibly because it was a quality which she lacked, and probably because she confused it with intuition, of which, to do her justice, she possessed an unusual share. Now, this intuition was at work, at work well and truly; and the result which this mental contortionist ascribed to pure reason was nearer to the truth than a real logician could well have hoped to attain by confining himself to legitimate data. In short, she had determined to her own satisfaction that Mr. Gianapolis was the clue to the mystery; that Mr. Gianapolis was not (as she had once supposed) enacting the part of an amiable liar when he declared that there were, in London, such apartments as that represented by Olaf van Noord; that Mr. Gianapolis was

acquainted with the present whereabouts of Mrs. Leroux; that Mr. Gianapolis knew who murdered Iris Vernon; and that Scotland Yard was a benevolent institution for the support of those of enfeebled intellect.

These results achieved, she broke her long silence at the moment that the car was turning into Richmond High Street.

"My dear!" she exclaimed, clutching Helen's arm, "I see it all!"

"Oh!" cried the girl, "how you startled me! I thought you were ill or that you had seen something frightful . . ."

"I have . . . seen something . . . frightful," declared Denise Ryland. She glared across at the haggard Leroux. "Harry . . . Leroux," she continued, "it is very fortunate . . . that I came to London . . . very fortunate."

"I am sincerely glad that you did," answered the novelist, with one of his kindly, weary smiles.

"My dear," said Denise Ryland, turning again to Helen Cumberly, "You say you met that . . . cross-eyed . . . being . . . Gianapolis, again?"

"Good Heavens!" cried Helen; "I thought I should never get rid of him; a most loathsome man!"

"My dear . . . child"—Denise squeezed her tightly by the arm, and peered into her face, intently—"cultivate . . . *deliberately* cultivate that man's acquaintance!"

Helen stared at her friend as though she suspected the latter's sanity.

"I am afraid I do not understand at all," she said, breathlessly.

"I am positive that I do not," declared Leroux, who was as much surprised as Helen. "In the first place I am not acquainted with this cross-eyed being."

"You are . . . out of this!" cried Denise Ryland with a sweeping

movement of the left hand; "entirely . . . out of it! This is no *man's* . . . business . . ."

"But my dear Denise!" exclaimed Helen . . .

"I beseech you; I entreat you . . . I order . . . you to cultivate . . . that . . . execrable . . . being!"

"Perhaps," said Helen, with eyes widely opened, "you will condescend to give me some slight reason why I should do anything so extraordinary and undesirable?"

"Undesirable!" cried Denise. "On the contrary . . . it is *most* . . . desirable! It is essential. The wretched . . . cross-eyed . . . creature has presumed to fall in love . . . with you . . ."

"Oh!" cried Helen, flushing, and glancing rapidly at Leroux, who now was thoroughly interested, "please do not talk nonsense!"

"It is no . . . nonsense. It is the finger . . . of Providence. Do you know where you can find . . . him?"

"Not exactly; but I have a shrewd suspicion," again she glanced in an embarrassed way at Leroux, "that he will know where to find *me*."

"Who is this presumptuous person?" inquired the novelist, leaning forward, his dark blue eyes aglow with interest.

"Never mind," replied Denise Ryland, "you will know . . . soon enough. In the meantime . . . as I am simply . . . starving, suppose we see about . . . lunch?"

Moved by some unaccountable impulse, Helen extended her hand to Leroux, who took it quietly in his own and held it, looking down at the slim fingers as though he derived strength and healing from their touch.

"Poor boy," she said softly.

CHAPTER XXXIV

Detective-Sergeant Sowerby was seated in Dunbar's room at New Scotland Yard. Some days had elapsed since that critical moment when, all unaware of the fact, they had stood within three yards of the much-wanted Soames, in the fauteuils of the east-end music-hall. Every clue thus far investigated had proved a cul-de-sac. Dunbar, who had literally been working night and day, now began to show evidence of his giant toils. The tawny eyes were as keen as ever, and the whole man as forceful as of old, but in the intervals of conversation, his lids would droop wearily; he would only arouse himself by a perceptible effort.

Sowerby, whose bowler hat lay upon Dunbar's table, was clad in the familiar raincoat, and his ruddy cheerfulness had abated not one whit.

Dunbar looked up with a start, as the door quietly opened and in walked M. Gaston Max arrayed in his inimitable traveling coat, and holding his hat of velour in his gloved hand. He bowed politely.

"Good morning, gentlemen," he said.

"Good morning," said Dunbar and Sowerby together.

Sowerby hastened to place a chair for the distinguished visitor. M. Max, thanking him with a bow, took his seat, and from an inside pocket extracted a notebook.

"There are some little points," he said with a deprecating wave of the hand, "which I should like to confirm." He opened the book, sought the wanted page, and continued: "Do either of you know a person answering to the following description: Height, about four feet eight and a half inches, medium build and carries himself with a nervous stoop. Has a habit of rubbing his palms together when addressing any one.

Has plump hands with rather tapering fingers, and a growth of reddish down upon the backs thereof, indicating that he has red or reddish hair. His chin recedes slightly and is pointed, with a slight cleft parallel with the mouth and situated equidistant from the base of the chin and the lower lip. A nervous mannerism of the latter periodically reveals the lower teeth, one of which, that immediately below the left canine, is much discolored. He is clean-shaven, but may at some time have worn whiskers. His eyes are small and ferret-like, set very closely together and of a ruddy brown color. His nose is wide at the bridge, but narrows to an unusual point at the end. In profile it is irregular, or may have been broken at some time. He has scanty eye brows set very high, and a low forehead with two faint, vertical wrinkles starting from the inner points of the eye-brows. His natural complexion is probably sallow, and his hair (as hitherto mentioned) either red or of a sandy color. His ears are set far back, and the lobes are thin and pointed. His hair is perfectly straight and sparse, and there is a depression of the cheeks where one would expect to find a prominence: that is—at the cheekbone. The cranial development is unusual. The skull slopes back from the crown at a remarkable angle, there being no protuberance at the back, but instead a straight slope to the spine, sometimes seen in the Teutonic races, and in this case much exaggerated. Viewed from the front the skull is narrow, the temples depressed, and the crown bulging over the ears, and receding to a ridge on top. In profile the forehead is almost apeline in size and contour . . ."

"Soames!" exclaimed Inspector Dunbar, leaping to his feet, and

bringing both his palms down with a simultaneous bang upon the table before him—"Soames, by God!"

M. Max, shrugging and smiling slightly, returned his notebook to his pocket, and, taking out a cigar-case placed it, open, upon the table, inviting both his confrères, with a gesture, to avail themselves of its contents.

"I thought so," he said simply. "I am glad."

Sowerby selected a cigar in a dazed manner, but Dunbar, ignoring the presence of the cigar-case, leaned forward across the table, his eyes blazing, and his small, even, lower teeth revealed in a sort of grim smile.

"M. Max," he said tensely—"you are a clever man! Where have you got him?"

"I have not got him," replied the Frenchman, selecting and lighting one of his own cigars. "He is much too useful to be locked up . . ."

"But . . ."

"But yes, my dear Inspector—he is safe; ah! he is quite safe. And on Tuesday night he is going to introduce us to Mr. King!"

"Mr. King!" roared Dunbar; and in three strides of the long legs he was around the table and standing before the Frenchman.

"Soames," continued M. Max quietly—"he is now known as Lucas, by the way—is a man of very remarkable character; a fact indicated by his quite unusual skull. He has no more will than this cigar"—he held the cigar up between his fingers, illustratively—"but of stupid, pig obstinacy, that *canaille-saligaud*!—has enough for all the cattle in Europe! He is like a man who knows that he stands upon a sinking ship, yet who, whilst promising to take the plunge every moment, hesitates and will continue to hesitate until someone pushes him in. *Pardieu*! I push! Because of his pig

obstinacy I am compelled to take risks most unnecessary. He will not consent, that Soames, to open the door for us . . ."

"What door?" snapped Dunbar.

"The door of the establishment of Mr. King," explained Max, blandly.

"But where is it?"

"It is somewhere between Limehouse Causeway—is it not called so?—and the riverside. But although I have been there, myself, I can tell you no more . . ."

"What! you have been there yourself?"

"But yes—most decidedly. I was there some nights ago. But they are ingenious, ah! they are so ingenious!—so Chinese! I should not have known even the little I do know if it were not for the inquiries which I made last week. I knew that the letters to Mr. Leroux which were supposed to come from Paris were handed by Soames to someone who posted them to Paris from Bow, East. You remember how I found the impression of the postmark?"

Dunbar nodded, his eyes glistening; for that discovery of the Frenchman's had filled him with a sort of envious admiration.

"Well, then," continued Max, "I knew that the inquiry would lead me to your east-end, and I suspected that I was dealing with Chinamen; therefore, suitably attired, of course, I wandered about in those interesting slums on more than one occasion; and I concluded that the only district in which a Chinaman could live without exciting curiosity was that which lies off the West India Dock Road . . ."

Dunbar nodded significantly at Sowerby, as who should say: "What did I tell you about this man?"

"Therefore," continued M. Max, "I shall ask you to have a party ready on Tuesday night in Limehouse Causeway—suitably concealed,

of course; and as I am almost sure that the haunt of Mr. King is actually upon the riverside (I heard one little river sound as I was coming away) a launch party might cooperate with you in effecting the raid."

"The raid!" said Dunbar, turning from a point by the window, and looking back at the Frenchman. "Do you seriously tell me that we are going to raid Mr. King's on Tuesday night?"

"Most certainly," was the confident reply. "I had hoped to form one of the raiding party, but *non d'un nom!*"—he shrugged, in his graceful fashion—"I must be one of the rescued!"

"Of the rescued!"

"You see I visited that establishment as a smoker of opium . . ."

"You took that risk?"

"It was no greater risk than is run by quite a number of people socially well-known in London, my dear Inspector Dunbar! I was introduced by an habitué and a member of the best society; and since nobody knows that Gaston Max is in London—that Gaston Max has any business in hand likely to bring him to London—*pardieu*, what danger did I incur? But, excepting the lobby—the cave of the dragon (a stranger apartment even than that in the Rue St. Claude) and the Chinese cubiculum where I spent the night—*mon Dieu!* what a night!—I saw nothing of the establishment . . ."

"But you must know where it is!" cried Dunbar.

"I was driven there in a closed limousine, and driven away in the same vehicle . . ."

"You got the number?"

"It was impossible. These are clever people! But it must be a simple matter, Inspector, to trace a fine car like that which regularly appears in those east-end streets?"

"Every constable in the division

must be acquainted with it," replied Dunbar, confidently. "I'll know all about that car inside the next hour!"

"If on Tuesday night you could arrange to have it followed," continued M. Max, "it would simplify matters. What I have done is this: I have bought the man Soames—up to a point. But so deadly is his fear of the mysterious Mr. King that although he has agreed to assist me in my plans, he will not consent—that pig—to divulge an atom of information until the raid is successfully performed.

"Then for heaven's sake what is he going to do?"

"Visitors to the establishment (it is managed by a certain Mr. Ho-Pin; make a note of him, that Ho-Pin) having received the necessary dose of opium are locked in for the night. On Tuesday, Soames, who acts as valet to poor fools using the place, has agreed—for a price—to unlock the door of the room in which I shall be . . ."

"What!" cried Dunbar, "you are going to risk yourself alone in that place *again?*"

"I have paid a very heavy fee," replied the Frenchman with his odd smile, "and it entitles me to a second visit; I shall pay that second visit on Tuesday night, and my danger will be no greater than on the first occasion."

"But Soames may betray you!"

"Fear nothing; I have measured my Soames, not only anthropologically, but otherwise. I fear only his folly, not his knavery. He will not betray me. *Morbleu!* he is too much a frightened man. I do not know what has taken place; but I could see that, assured of escaping the police for complicity in the murder, he would turn King's evidence immediately . . ."

"And you gave him that assurance?"

"At first I did not reveal myself. I weighed up my man very carefully; I measured that Soames-pig. I had several stories in readiness, but his character indicated which I should use. Therefore, suddenly I arrested him!"

"Arrested him?"

"*Pardieu!* I arrested him very quietly in a corner of the bar of 'Three Nuns' public house. My course was justified. He saw that the reign of his mysterious Mr. King was nearing its close, and that I was his only hope . . ."

"But still he refused . . ."

"His refusal to reveal anything whatever under those circumstances impressed me more than all. It showed me that in Mr. King I had to deal with a really wonderful and powerful man; a man who ruled by means of *fear*; a man of gigantic *force*. I had taken the pattern of the key fitting the Yale lock of the door of my room, and I secured a duplicate immediately. (Soames has not access to the keys, you understand.) I must rely upon my diplomacy to secure the same room again—all turns upon that; and at an hour after midnight, or later if advisable, Soames has agreed to let me out. Beyond this, I could induce him to do nothing—nothing whatever. *Cochon!* Therefore, having got out of the locked room, I must rely upon my own wits—and the Browning pistol which I have presented to Soames together with the duplicate key . . ."

"Why not go armed?" asked Dunbar.

"One's clothes are searched, my dear Inspector, by an expert! I have given the key, the pistol, and the implements of the house-breaker (a very neat set which fits easily into the breast-pocket) to Soames, to conceal in his private room at the establishment until Tuesday night. All

turns upon my securing the same apartment. If I am unable to do so, the arrangements for the raid will have to be postponed. Opium smokers are faddists essentially, however, and I think I can manage to pretend that I have formed a strange *penchant* for this particular cubiculum . . ."

"By whom were you introduced to the place?" said Dunbar, leaning back against the table and facing the Frenchman.

"That I cannot in honor divulge," was the reply; "but the representative of Mr. King who actually admitted me to the establishment is one Gianapolis; address unknown, but telephone number 18642 East. Make a note of him, that Gianapolis."

"I'll arrest him in the morning," said Sowerby, writing furiously in his notebook.

"*Nom d'un p'tit bonhomme!* M. Sowerby, you will do nothing of that foolish description, my dear friend," said Max; and Dunbar glared at the unfortunate sergeant. "Nothing whatever must be done to arouse suspicion between now and the moment of the raid. You must be circumspect—ah *morbleu!* so circumspect. By all means trace this Mr. Gianapolis; yes. But do not let him *suspect* that he is being traced . . ."

CHAPTER XXXV

Helen Cumberly and Denise Ryland peered from the window of the former's room into the dusk of the Square, until their eyes ached with the strain of an exercise so unnatural.

"I tell you," said Denise with emphasis, "that . . . sooner or later . . . he will come prowling . . . around. The mere fact that he did not appear . . . last night . . . counts for nothing. His own crooked . . . plans, no doubt, detained him . . ."

Helen sighed wearily. Denise Ryland's scheme was extremely distasteful to her, but whenever she thought of the pathetic eyes of Leroux she found new determination. Several times she had essayed to analyze the motives which actuated her; always she feared to pursue such inquiries beyond a certain point. Now that she was beginning to share her friend's views upon the matter, all social plans sank into insignificance, and she lived only in the hope of again meeting Gianapolis, of tracing out the opium group, and of finding Mrs. Leroux. In what state did she hope and expect to find her? This was a double question which kept her wakeful through the dreary watches of the night . . .

"Look!"

Denise Ryland grasped her by the arm, pointing out into the darkened Square. A furtive figure crossed from the northeast corner into the shade of some trees and might be vaguely detected coming nearer and nearer.

"There he is!" whispered Denise Ryland, excitedly; "I told you he couldn't . . . keep a way. I know that kind of brute. There is nobody at home, so listen: I will watch . . . from the drawing-room, and you . . . light up here and move about . . . as if preparing to go out."

Helen, aware that she was flushed with excitement, fell in with the proposal readily; and having switched on the lights in her room and put on her hat so that her moving shadow was thrown upon the casement curtain, she turned out the light again and ran to rejoin her friend. She found the latter peering eagerly from the window of the drawing-room.

"He thinks you are coming out!" gasped Denise. "He has slipped . . . around the corner. He will

pretend to be . . . passing . . . this way . . . the cross-eyed . . . hypocrite. Do you feel capable . . . of the task?"

"Quite," Helen declared, her cheeks flushed and her eyes sparkling. "You will follow us as arranged; for heaven's sake, don't lose us!"

"If the Doctor knew of this," breathed Denise, "he would never . . . forgive me. But no woman . . . no *true* woman . . . could refuse to undertake . . . so palpable . . . a duty . . ."

Helen Cumberly, wearing a warm, golfing jersey over her dress, with a woollen cap to match, ran lightly down the stairs and out into the Square, carrying a letter. She walked along to the pillar-box, and having examined the address upon the envelope with great care, by the light of an adjacent lamp, posted the letter, turned—and there, radiant and bowing, stood Mr. Gianapolis!

"Kismet is really most kind to me!" he cried. "My friend, who lives, as I think I mentioned once before, in Peer's Chambers, evidently radiates good luck. I last had the good fortune to meet you when on my way to see him, and I now meet you again within five minutes of leaving him! My dear Miss Cumberly, I trust you are quite well?"

"Quite," said Helen, holding out her hand. "I am awfully glad to see you again, Mr. Gianapolis!"

He was distinctly encouraged by her tone. He bent forward confidentially.

"The night is young," he said; and his smile was radiant. "May I hope that your expedition does not terminate at this post-box?"

Helen glanced at him doubtfully, and then down at her jersey. Gianapolis was unfeignedly delighted with her naïvete.

"Surely you don't want to be seen

with me in this extraordinary costume!" she challenged.

"My dear Miss Cumberly, it is simply enchanting! A girl with such a figure as yours never looks better than when she dresses sportily!"

The latent vulgarity of the man was escaping from the bondage in which ordinarily he confined it. A real passion had him in its grip, and the real Gianapolis was speaking. Helen hesitated for one fateful moment; it was going to be even worse than she had anticipated. She glanced up at Palace Mansions.

Across a curtained window moved a shadow, that of a man wearing a long gown and having his hands clasped behind him, whose head showed as an indistinct blur because the hair was wildly disordered. This shadow passed from side to side of the window and was lost from view. It was the shadow of Henry Leroux.

"I am afraid I have a lot of work to do," said Helen, with a little catch in her voice.

"My dear Miss Cumberly," cried Gianapolis, eagerly, placing his hand upon her arm, "it is precisely of your work that I wish to speak to you! Your work is familiar to me—I never miss a line of it; and knowing how you delight in the *outré* and how inimitably you can describe scenes of Bohemian life, I had hoped, since it was my privilege to meet you, that you would accept my services as *cicerone* to some of the lesser-known resorts of Bohemian London. Your article, 'Dinner in Soho' was a delightful piece of observation, and the third—I think it was the third—of the same series: 'Curiosities of the Café Royal,' was equally good. But your powers of observation would be given greater play in any one of the three establishments to which I should be honored to escort you."

Helen Cumberly, though perfectly self-reliant, as only the modern girl journalist can be, was fully aware that, not being of the flat-haired, bespectacled type, she was called upon to exercise rather more care in her selection of companions for copy-hunting expeditions than was necessary in the case of certain fellow-members of the Scribes Club. No power on earth could have induced her to accept such an invitation from such a man, under ordinary circumstances; even now, with so definite and important an object in view, she hesitated. The scheme might lead to nothing; Denise Ryland (horrible thought!) might lose the track; the track might lead to no place of importance, so far as her real inquiry was concerned.

In this hour of emergency, new and wiser ideas were flooding her brain. For instance, they might have admitted Inspector Dunbar to the plot. With Inspector Dunbar dogging her steps, she should have felt perfectly safe; but Denise—she had every respect for Denise's reasoning powers, and force of character—yet Denise nevertheless might fail her.

She glanced into the crooked eyes of Gianapolis, then up again at Palace Mansions.

The shadow of Henry Leroux recrossed the cream-curtained window.

"So early in the evening," pursued the Greek, rapidly, "the more interesting types will hardly have arrived; nevertheless, at the Memphis Café . . ."

"Memphis Café!" muttered Helen, glancing at him rapidly; "what an odd name."

"Ah! my dear Miss Cumberly!" cried Gianapolis, with triumph—"I knew that you had never heard of the true haunts of Bohemia! The Memphis Café—it is actually a club

—was founded by Olaf van Noord two years ago, and at present has a membership including some of the most famous artistic folk of London; not only painters, but authors, composers, actors, actresses. I may add that the peerage, male and female, is represented."

"It is actually a gaming-house, I suppose?" said Helen, shrewdly.

"A gaming-house? Not at all! If what you wish to see is play for high stakes, it is not to the Memphis Café you must go. I can show you Society losing its money in thousands, if the spectacle would amuse you. I only await your orders . . ."

"You certainly interest me," said Helen; and, indeed, this half-glimpse into phases of London life hidden from the world—even from the greater part of the ever-peering journalistic world—was not lacking in fascination.

The planning of a scheme in its entirety constitutes a mental effort which not infrequently blinds us to the shortcomings of certain essential details. Denise's plan, a good one in many respects, had the fault of being over elaborate. Now, when it was too late to advise her, friend of any amendment, Helen perceived that there was no occasion for her to suffer the society of Gianapolis.

To bid him good evening, and then to follow him, herself, was a plan much superior to that of keeping him company whilst Denise followed both!

Moreover, he would then be much more likely to go home, or to some address which it would be useful to know. What a *very* womanish scheme theirs had been, after all; Helen told herself that the most stupid man imaginable could have placed his finger upon its weak spot, immediately.

But her mind was made up. If it

were possible, she would warn Denise of the change of plan; if it were not, then she must rely upon her friend to see through the ruse which she was about to practise upon the Greek.

"Good-night, Mr. Gianapolis!" she said abruptly, and held out her hand to the smiling man. His smile faded. "I should love to join you, but really you must know that it's impossible. I will arrange to make up a party, with pleasure, if you will tell me where I can 'phone you?"

"But," he began . . .

"Many thanks, it's really impossible; there are limits even to the escapades allowed under the cloak of 'Copy!' Where can I communicate with you?"

"Oh! how disappointed I am! But I must permit you to know your own wishes better than I can hope to know them, Miss Cumberly. Therefore—" Helen was persistently holding out her hand—"Good-night! Might I venture to telephone to *you* in the morning? We could then come to some arrangement, no doubt . . ."

"You might not find me at home . . ."

"But at nine o'clock!"

"It allows me no time to make up my party!"

"But such a party must not exceed three: yourself and two others . . ."

"Nevertheless, it has to be arranged."

"I shall ring up to-morrow evening, and if you are not at home, your maid will tell me when you are expected to return."

Helen quite clearly perceived that no address and no telephone number were forthcoming.

"You are committing yourself to endless and unnecessary trouble, Mr. Gianapolis, but if you really wish to do as you suggest, let it be so. Good-night!"

She barely touched his extended hand, turned, and ran fleetly back toward the door of Palace Mansions. Ere reaching the entrance, however, she dropped a handkerchief, stooped to recover it, and glanced back rapidly.

Gianapolis was just turning the corner.

Helen perceived the unmistakable form of Denise Ryland lurking in the Palace Mansions doorway, and, waving frantically to her friend, who was nonplussed at this change of tactics, she hurried back again to the corner and peeped cautiously after the retreating Greek.

There was a cab rack some fifty paces beyond, with three taxis stationed there. If Gianapolis chartered a cab, and she were compelled to follow in another, would Denise come upon the scene in time to take up the pre-arranged role of sleuthhound?

Gianapolis hesitated only for a few seconds; then, shrugging his shoulders, he stepped out into the road and into the first cab on the rank. The man cranked his engine, leaped into his seat and drove off. Helen Cumberly, ignoring the curious stares of the two remaining taximen, ran out from the shelter of the corner, and jumped into the next cab, crying breathlessly:

"Follow that cab! Don't let the man in it suspect, but follow, and don't lose sight of it!"

They were off!

Helen glanced ahead quickly, and was just in time to see Gianapolis's cab disappear; then, leaning out of the window, she indulged in an extravagant pantomime for the benefit of Denise Ryland, who was hurrying after her.

"Take the next cab and follow me!" she cried, whilst her friend raised her hand to her ear the better to detect the words. "I cannot wait

for you or the track will be lost . . ."

Helen's cab swung around the corner—and she was not by any means certain that Denise Ryland had understood her; but to have delayed would have been fatal, and she must rely upon her friend's powers of penetration to form a third in this singular procession.

Whilst these thoughts were passing in the pursuer's mind, Gianapolis, lighting a cigarette, had thrown himself back in a corner of the cab and was mentally reviewing the events of the evening—that is, those events which were associated with Helen Cumberly. He was disappointed but hopeful: at any rate he had suffered no definite repulse. Without doubt his reflections had been less roseate had he known that he was followed, not only by two, but by *three* trackers.

He had suspected for some time, now, and the suspicion had made him uneasy, that his movements were being watched. Police surveillance, he did not fear; his arrangements were too complete, he believed, to occasion him any ground for anxiety even though half the Criminal Investigation Department were engaged in dogging his every movement. He understood police methods very thoroughly, and all his experience told him that this elusive shadow which latterly had joined him unbidden, and of whose presence he was specially conscious whenever his steps led him toward Palace Mansions, was no police officer.

Gianapolis shuddered. It was a very profitable service, that of Mr. King, yet there were times when the fear of his employer struck a chill to his heart; there were times when he almost wished to be done with it all . . .

By Whitechapel Station he dis-

charged the cab, and, standing on the pavement, lighted a new cigarette from the glowing stump of the old one. A fair amount of traffic passed along the Whitechapel Road, for the night was yet young; therefore Gianapolis attached no importance to the fact that almost at the moment when his own cab turned and was driven away, a second cab swung around the corner of Mount Street and disappeared.

But, could he have seen the big limousine drawn up to the pavement some fifty yards west of London Hospital, his reflections must have been terrible, indeed.

Fate willed that he should know nothing of this matter, and, his thoughts automatically reverting again to Helen Cumberly, he enjoyed that imaginary companionship throughout the remainder of his walk which led him along Cambridge Road, and from thence, by a devious route, to the northern end of Globe Road.

It may be enlightening to leave Gianapolis for a moment and to return to Mount Street.

Helen Cumberly's cabman, seeing the cab ahead pull up outside the railway station, turned around the nearest corner on the right (as has already appeared), and there stopped. Helen, who also had observed the maneuver of the taxi ahead, hastily descended, and giving the man half a sovereign, said rapidly:

"I must follow, on foot, now, I am afraid! but as I don't know this district at all, could you bring the cab along without attracting attention, and keep me in sight?"

"I'll try, miss," replied the man, with alacrity; "but it won't be an easy job."

"Do your best," cried Helen, and ran off rapidly around the corner, and into Whitechapel Road.

She was just in time to see Gianapolis throw away the stump of his first cigarette and stroll off, smoking a second. She rejoiced that she was inconspicuously dressed, but, simple as was her attire, it did not fail to attract coarse comment from some whom she jostled on her way. She ignored all this, however, and, at a discreet distance followed the Greek, never losing sight of him for more than a moment.

When, leaving Cambridge Road, a considerable thoroughfare, he plunged into a turning, crooked and uninviting, which ran roughly at right angles with the former, she hesitated, but only for an instant. Not another pedestrian was visible in the street, which was very narrow and ill-lighted, but she plainly saw Gianapolis passing under a street-lamp some thirty yards along. Glancing back in quest of the cabman, but failing to perceive him, she resumed the pursuit.

She was nearly come to the end of the street (Gianapolis already had disappeared into an even narrower turning on the left) when a bright light suddenly swept from behind and cast her shadow far out in front of her upon the muddy road. She heard the faint thudding of a motor, but did not look back, for she was confident that this was the taximan following. She crept to the corner and peered around it; Gianapolis had disappeared.

The light grew brighter—brighter yet; and, with the engine running very silently, the car came up almost beside her. She considered this unwise on the man's part, yet welcomed his presence, for in this place, not a soul was visible, and for the first time she began to feel afraid . . .

A shawl, or some kind of silken wrap was suddenly thrown over her head!

She shrieked frenziedly, but the arm of her captor was now clasped tightly about her mouth and head. She felt herself to be suffocating. The silken thing which enveloped her was redolent of the perfume of roses; it was stifling her. She fought furiously, but her arms were now seized in an irresistible grasp, and she felt herself lifted—and placed upon a cushioned seat.

Instantly, there was a forward movement of the vehicle which she had mistaken for a taxicab . . . and she knew that she was speeding through those unknown east-end streets—God! to what destination?

She could not cry out for she was fighting for air—she seemed to be encircled by a swirling cloud of purplish mist. On—and on—and on, she was borne; she knew that she must have been drugged in some way, for consciousness was slipping—slipping . . .

Helpless as a child in that embrace which never faltered, she was lifted again and carried down many

steps. Insensibility was very near, now, but with all the will that was hers she struggled to fend it off. She felt herself laid down upon soft cushions . . .

A guttural voice was speaking, from a vast distance away:

"What is this that you bwring us, Mahâra?"

Answered a sweet, silvery voice:

"Does it matter to you what I bringing? It is one I hate—hate—*hate!* There will be *two* cases of 'ginger' to go away some day instead of *one*—that is all! *Said, yälla!*"

"Your pwrimitive passions will wruin us . . ."

The silvery voice grew even more silvery:

"Do you quarrel with me, Ho-Pin my friend?"

"This is England, not Burma! Gianapolis . . ."

"*Ah!* Whisper—*whisper* it to him, and . . ."

Oblivion closed in upon Helen Cumberly; she seemed to be sinking into the heart of a giant rose.

(*To be concluded*)

MAIDENLY

BY MARY CAROLYN DAVIES

A WOMAN must not breathe above
Her own heart's beating aught of love.
She must not say, unmaidenwise,
"My heaven shineth in your eyes—"
Some old, far law decreed it so.
Who made the law I do not know.

And so I sat all placid while
Love passed me. Glad I tried to smile;
I sang to drown my pulses' shout;
And prayed, to put my eyes' torch out.
Love did not see me as he went.
And I—on some days—am content.

FICTION'S MIRACLES

WHERE PLAUSIBILITY DOES NOT COUNT—SOME VAGARIES OF THE NOVELISTS—TAKING LIBERTIES WITH NATURE

BY MARTHA McCULLOCH-WILLIAMS

THE days of miracles are far from past for those who browse in the pastures of best-sellerdom. Best-seller writers, indeed, challenge those gentlemen, the poets, in their fine frenzy of imagination—which is, oftener than not, the brush where-with they lay on local color. Moreover, the brushwork leans sensibly toward the futurist manner, in its noble disregard alike of perspective and possibility. It may be that the reason for this futurist attitude toward mere fact is a certain doctrine of necessity, adduced once upon a time by a perfervid amateur to an unliterary person who nevertheless knew some things, and was narrow enough to think that fiction should have a regard for the probabilities.

The perfervid one had written a story, a romance of love flavored with a lord, English of course, who was quite bowled over by a wonderful American girl, unconventionally encountered in the course of her tour abroad. He, had followed her home, bringing all his choicest portable property, including such trifles as the family jewels, and a marvelous race-mare, already winner of heaven knows what classic events. Once safely landed in the bluegrass country, he rode straight to the charmer's mansion to find her out among full-blooming peach orchards, where he told her that he was on his way to the county race track, where his mare was due that afternoon to "put it all over" the local cracks.

Here the listener, knowing racing and race rules, revolted, asking:

"Don't you know that after such a journey the best horse in the world could win nothing without a long rest? Don't you know, also, that gentlemen don't ride their stable-stars—except in special classes. Most of all, don't you understand that racers are the most delicate of all machines—that they are all but kept in cotton-wool, specially stabled, fed, trained—that once they are keyed to racing pitch, they are guarded under lock and key?"

"I don't know any such things," said the perfervid person, majestically. "And if I did—what difference would it make? Unless Lord Dudley comes to Elizabeth, as I have made him, and tells her he means to win her along with the race, she must put up her hand against his title and the jewels and everything—why? there won't be any story at all."

Thus is ignorance invincible in the face of fact. It cannot all lie in the province of writers. Nobody expects editors or publishers' readers to be omniscient, but since the mass-mind has such a trick of accepting as gospel things seen in print, it is a pity that the purveyors of print do not take the trouble to make their product less unauthentic. Superficially it appears that it would not tax them greatly; they have but to keep ears and eyes open, and let things sink in for future reference. Thus the miracle-working might be sensibly diminished. Whether this

would be for the better or the worse is at least debatable.

One would need to roll together all the knights of the Round Table, Merlin at his best, as well as a professional strong man, to furnish forth the superlative heroes, whose achievements, and most of all, whose endurance, is largely the stuff of which best sellers are made. Any mere human male would rattle in their boots, after the manner of a peanut in a pumpkin shell. They defy alike "the laws of God, and man and—meter," and though subject to like passions with the rest of us, always raise the passions to about the n^{th} power. Do they fare forth a-Klondiking—temperatures of a hundred and ten below, barely nip them. Or else they suffer several hells—but you are immorally sure they are going to pull through. In the tropics—just the same. No sun shines hot enough to do more than give them brain fever; neither pirates, cannibals, nor enemies with a fat, private grudge can devise cruelties cruel enough to put them out of the running. Indeed, it is not too much to say that he who is cast in the role of hero can neither be hanged nor drowned. That is, not permanently or seriously—no matter how much appearances seem to attest the fact. Without faith they move mountains—these heroes in love or hate, or any old emotion, they are more terrible than an army with banners. If one could but kidnap a galley-load of them and set them fairly to work, tunneling through to China or re-planting the North Pole would be entirely feasible. Always, of course, supposing that as achievers they held their own.

They are so vitally endowed as to make the nine-lived cat seem paltry, even destitute. Witness the gentleman who, though hopelessly crushed by a falling tree, and drawing scant

breaths in bitter agony, was yet able to argue through a whole chapter against marrying the rich sweetheart bent on matrimony willy-nilly. Of course she married him out of hand; equally, of course, he got well, and turned out to be a lord by way of rewarding her. He is but typical of a miraculous multitude, but less miraculous than a brother hero, who specialized in doing things. Merlin must have predominated in his make-up: magic, and much of it, were requisite for the stunts he set himself. For instance, he considered it a small achievement in a single day to start sugar-boiling in a big sugar-bush, and keep it going to the queen's or the President's taste, to cut logs for a new house, and haul them to a saw mill, feed stock, do chores generally about a house in process of building, read somewhat of philosophy, rhapsodize over the lady who was to be mistress of the new house, and, in between, peel enough bark from certain medicinal twigs, to net him a pretty penny.

This would be all very well, except for the strain on the seasons—impossibility does not matter. Sugar-making takes place a full two months before bark slips so as to make peeling easy or even possible. But what's the compression of the calendar, compared to letting the hero thus fully express himself? Later on this same gentleman does planting which would require a Merlin crossed liberally with Burbank to accomplish—digs up wild things to make a hedge about the wonderful new house, reseats them, and, in the briefest while, has them growing and blowing, out-burgeoning themselves even if they had stood pat.

House-logs are kittle cattle—ill to handle, even dangerous—except, of course, when they fill a hero's need. Crass materialists, who have undertaken the construction of such build-

ings, will regard the intervention of a saw mill as a work of supererogation. It must be that the log house of fact is not even cousin-german to that of fiction, since one book-structure, very strongly featured not so long ago, got itself most sumptuously furnished when only the first story was up, and no sign of a roof in place. But the era was Colonial which perhaps explains such extravagance, in spite of the thrift credited alike to Patroons and Ruling Elders of that day. Notwithstanding, a plethora of such literature inclines one to quote: "You had better not know so many things than to know so many that ain't so."

Material things are thus laid hold of as examples from the fact that the word "Impossible," needs must be expunged, when it comes to the psychological side, the action and reaction of life and things on men and women, much more of men and women on each other. A man of marvelous vision, now dead, began his best novel with this phrase: "Whatever is impossible in this story is true." By truth he meant not actual happenings, but such a presentment of seed facts as set forth the living thing the seed grew to. Still, when the wires are too obvious, it is proper to laugh at the dancing puppets—the figures of the dance are so certainly foreknown. That indispensable factor, "the long arm of coincidence," begins casting its shadow early in the game. Especially if there chances to be a Past or so in cold storage. Depend on it, the Past will be brought forth, in full time to right the wrongs of the noble martyr, hero or heroine. Otherwise, where would be the happy ending without which no best-seller can win to court in the Realm of the Unreal?

If all best-sellers would confessedly make themselves of this realm, what an easing of the present strain

upon credulity! There the moon may rise in the west, provided such rising is the more decorative, without any violence to truth being done by such tampering with the planetary system. There, also, none could cavil at the compression of the seasons, the dislocations of flowering-times. The lady-novelist who decked out a garden with rather bleeding hearts, snowballs, roses, scarlet trumpet flowers, sunflowers, hollyhocks and asters, all at one fell swoop, and who makes a lover come in early May at evening to see the pretty-by-nights, at morning for the morning glories, the next evening to inspect the moon-flowers, might defy the captious with: "What if those flowers don't bloom for you until late mid-summer? I'm not dealing with things in your old world!"

With wise Homer nodding now and then, who shall cherish an inhuman passion for accuracy? Or who shall take to task romancers of degree for anachronisms small or great? Ours is a self-centered age—it accepts itself as having been from the beginning. The flux of speech it perceives to the extent of knowing when new slang becomes old. But it has no realization that words left in being by slang's reflux tides have not been always in full and regular standing. That is to say, though this age may consider them colloquial, or even inelegant, it lacks any sense of their chronology. Thus a famous, historical romancer makes folk living and moving and having their being a hundred-odd years back, mouth glibly "*skedaddle*," whose birth-date is the Civil War, "*scalawag*," part-increment of Reconstruction days; "*blizzard*," coinage of the plains in times even more recent, and "*jamboree*," a Mexican importation about coeval with "*scalawag*." They did not, however, mention familiarly "*greenbacks*." That re-

mained for another famous person—who fills his hero's pockets with them full fifteen years before the first were printed.

Thus does history, as well as horticulture and the seasons, suffer at the hands of romance. Agriculture fares no better—particularly when it concerns itself with the "Indian weed," tobacco. A parlous crop, tedious and tiring beyond words from start to finish, whoso raises it needs the patience of Job, and the muscle of Hercules. It is finicky withal, demanding hand-labor and perfect tilth, beside rich earth. Setting it is the hardest sort of work—it has to be done in wet weather, the setter moving half bent at a slow run, stabbing earth as he goes, sticking a tobacco plant in the stab-wound, and firming it with another stroke, without losing way. A few hours of it make the stoutest workers willing to cry quits—yet a woman who should know better, since her native state is the original home of tobacco culture, makes her hero, after planting his own crop by daylight, go and do the same thing for a neighbor by light o' the moon. However, since she evolved from her inner consciousness or somewhere a wholly new method of planting, the absurdity perhaps did not strike her hard. According to her chronicle, the planter first made holes in the tobacco hills, then dropped plants upon each hill—and *planted them with his foot.*

Another romancer from another tobacco state dilates upon: "the deep green of tobacco fields in early May"—when, to speak truth, tobacco fields are, except for the new-set plants, as bare and brown as a desert. Another, a man-person this, has much to say of "coon hounds," thus creating a new canine entity. Nose makes the coon dog—nothing else. Racially he may be mongrel, puppy, whelp or

hound, or cur of low degree. But here's a squinting toward the vagaries of dialect, as written by folk who have no ear for its niceties. That way lies not madness but prolixity, even as does consideration of those athletic heroines who rescue stricken heroes from battle, murder or sudden death. Their name is legion, their estate human and various, but whether, high or low, rich or poor, proud or meltingly sweet, they are always on hand, up and coming—all the more so if it happens that they are still cherishing a gall of bitterness toward their predestined conquerors. Unless, indeed, they are purpose-ridden dames or damsels, with a capital letter brand of emotion, and a yearning to be reckoned "advanced" or broad-minded. The "advanced" may say in effect: "Die and be hanged to you, sir"—then suffer tortures of remorse that pave the way for surrender.

The broad-minded one who has the spur of a Past rarely balks at achieving a Present, even when she fancies it will play hob with the Commandments. It is not, of course, going to play hob with them—one reads with a comfortable conviction, that in the end all crooked things are to be made straight. Just how, is none of the reader's concern—the lucky reader who seldom stops to think that all the troubles heaped on youth and innocence in all the books are not a patch on the troubles of the makers, in fetching them safely through, right side up with care.

Jesting aside, the real miracle of fiction is, that the seven possible stories, told since the beginning of time, to every age, nation and race, of every clime, color and condition, whether sages or savages, have never lost, will never lose, their enthralling charm. They lie at the foundations alike of myth and civilization; of them have been born Poetry, Music,

Painting, Drama—the great arts and the small. Prince and peasant, gray-beards and rosy children, alike have thrilled to them—and will thrill to the end of time. Of these is their enduring fabric woven: Adventure,

Conquest, Vengeance, Sacrifice, Love, Mystery, Goblin-Ghosts. However proteanly they may change, meet, mingle, or mask one another, these are the Elementals whose roots strike back beyond recorded Time.



IN RETROSPECT

BY ANNIE BEAUFORD HOUSEMAN

AH, sweetest wild rose blowing—
 Glowing, glowing, glowing—
 I would that I had plucked thee
 And worn thee on my breast.
 I would that I had blended
 Thy fragrant life—now ended—
 With all my own, and tucked thee
 Within my heart to rest.

Ah, Wind, thy soft song bringing—
 Singing, singing, singing—
 I would that thou couldst bring again
 That wild rose back to me.
 I would that thou couldst say to her
 I send my love each day to her,
 And bring her back with spring again,
 My own wild rose to be.

Ah, sweetest wild rose blowing,
 There are many flowers growing
 Beside the path I daily tread
 Along my woodland way,
 But never flower half so sweet
 As thou, has blossomed at my feet.
 Ah, would that thy bright petals spread
 Beside my path to-day!

JAMAICA GINGER

by
Ethelbert D. Burrows



SHORTY Blair had a girl. That is to say, Shorty Blair thought he had a girl and a rattling good prospect of matrimony—until he interviewed Pa Pressly in the latter's mahogany-wainscoted office down near Bowling Green. At the conclusion of that interview—which concerned, almost entirely, the future life and welfare of Miss Madeleine Pressly, debutante—y o u n g Blair was forced to admit that he had been a trifle precipitate; and that, after all, his prospect was scarcely more than a possibility. Also he found himself committed to a program so entirely different from any he had previously contemplated that as he stood on the corner thinking it over it almost took his breath away.

"What have you done to deserve her?" Pa Pressly had snorted, aiming an eight-inch perfecto in the general direction of Mr. Bertrand Buffington (alias "Shorty") Blair. "Wriggled your way through college with the help of half your class, just because you were needed on the team? Kicked an inflated pigskin around a ten-acre lot for the edification of a few thousand da—that is, frenzied enthusiasts? Beat Yale on a fluke—"

"Oh, I say, Mr. Pressly," Shorty had protested, "that touchdown was no fluke!"

"Well—it was scarcely a qualification for matrimony." The older man scored one and smiled. "Grid-iron gyrations aren't much in de-

mand down here, Blair!" Fact was, Pa Pressly, with other alumni, had sat in the Yale stand that afternoon and gazed awe-stricken at "Touchdown" Blair as the latter dashed through the entire Blue defense and over the Blue line, for the only score in a game fraught with sensational episodes. The memory still rankled. On the other hand, Pa Pressly was forced to admit that the man who could pierce Old Eli's famous line, "straight-arm" four bulldog backs in rapid succession, and win a game against the three-time champions of America, possessed the mettle which he hoped and expected to find in the man who was to be the father of his daughter's children!

"All I want is a chance," Shorty had said, less confidently; "you'd give your worst enemy that!"

"Maybe," Pa Pressly had retorted, tapping on the arm of his easy chair a moment. "I guess we'll have to try you out," he had sighed finally.

"Which means?"

"That you are going through a course of sprouts, young man, before you get my daughter! That you are leaving next Tuesday morning, on the *Helvetia*, for the soggiest, slimiest, stuffiest little fruit-ranch on the two hemispheres! There you will become nursemaid-in-chief to some twenty-two million banana stalks! Keep the mortality rate among those bananas down lower than the man whose job you

are going to get was able to do; push down the cost and pull up the quality—and I'll turn you over to Mazie with a big O.K. on your collar! Are you game?"

"Game? Sure—anything!" Shorty had responded, having no idea of what else to say. At least, Pa Pressly was not forbidding him the house, or sending Mazie off to a convent!

"Incidentally, Blair"—and here was the red pepper in the caramel—"you'll be in close touch with Carter Cunningham down there in Zapatilla—you know Carter, I believe?" Know him? Know Carter Cunningham, son of Pa Pressly's deceased associate in the fruit business and "runner-up in the Madeleine finals," as a wag at the club had expressed it? Aye—and likewise yea—well did he know Carter Cunningham, bad cess to him!

"Yes, indeed!" he had therefore responded enthusiastically, almost disarming his chuckling inquisitor. "Great fellow, Carter! I'll be glad to see him again!"

"Well, he's manager of the Consolidated—the parent company," Pa Pressly had continued, "and you'll have the little brother—the Chiriqui; so you won't clash. If you do, better yield a bit to him, Shorty—he's the senior employee, you know."

"Yes, sir," Shorty had replied, without enthusiasm—for he saw trouble ahead.

The following Tuesday morning Mr. Bertrand Buffington (alias "Shorty") Blair, having spent one whole evening with his mother and five with Miss Madelaine Pressly, bade civilization a long, wistful farewell and took ship for the soul-staggering banana port of Zapatilla, in the republic of Colombia, ten degrees above the equator.

Lest elucidation be held too long in reserve—scrambling the egg of

romance on the over-heated grid-dle of criticism, as it were—be it known at this point that Mylo B. ("Pa") Pressly, sometimes known as "The Boston Bull," happened to be president, imperator and *deus ex machina* of the Consolidated Fruit Corporation, of New York, Boston, London and Central America, and of all of its subsidiary companies, of which the Chiriqui Fruit Company was one. More surely than the Kaiser rules his Germany from the deck of the *Hohenzollern*; King George his Britain from the staunch *Victoria Nyansa*; the President his Yankee-land from the famous *Mayflower*—more surely and absolutely than any of these did Mylo B. Pressly sway the fortunes of Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Panama and Colombia from the luxurious after-deck of his own steam-yacht, the *Prestolite*. From Cape Catôche on the north to Cartagena on the south, save where Uncle Sam governed his Canal, the Company ruled the land—pitilessly, arrogantly, coercively—fearing naught save the iron hand of Providence; respecting not even that! And Central America, because its officials had tasted Company gold and its inhabitants were too ignorant and shiftless to complain, accepted the yoke and helped the Company to propagate and pick and carry away the golden fruit which grew in her savannahs and along her hillsides.

The man who could make two bananas grow where one had grown before, or who could produce an additional "hand," or cluster, on each of the great stems which bore the mellow fruit or who could, by thinking, add an inch to the length of each aureate integer—could have anything within the gift of Mylo B. Pressly. Aye, even his only daughter, Madelaine, providing that self-reliant young woman agreed to the

deal! Truly, thought Shorty Blair, as the snow-white *Helvetia* glided down past Quarantine and out toward the light-ship, the prize was worth the trial. "And don't you forget," he admonished himself, vehemently; "you're the fair-haired boy that licked Yale! Licked Yale—get me?"

II

There was no denying the fact that it was insufferably hot, even for Zapatilla in July. Ever since sun-up—which lamentable but nevertheless inevitable catastrophe had occurred at five o'clock of an equatorial morning—a great burning-glass had apparently stationed itself immediately above the group of coral islands dotting Solante Bay, persuading the heat waves of the entire Gulf into a radius of a few square miles. To make matters worse, and lest some of the hardier sun-absorbers might find a breath of real air hidden away in some stray corner, a withering, blistering trade-wind scurried up the main (and only) street of the torpescent banana town, raising whirlpools of dust to the height of a man's nostrils and sending the last of the choking Colombians coughing and spluttering into his cabin for questionable relief.

Be that as it may, Shorty Blair and Manuel Aguilerez were clearly exceeding their respective authorities as resident manager of the Chiriqui Fruit Company and inspector of the port of Zapatilla, *pro tem*. For, argued the remaining three thousand sweltering residents in this wood-and-whitewash metropolis, was it written in Señor Blair's contract with the Company, or in Señor Aguilerez's appointment to office, that either one or the other, or both, should be permitted to commandeer the very last hundred-

weight of ice in Veragua Province—and to hold it, lump by lump, against all comers? No! *Dios mio!* No!

Alas, but they had done so! Early in the morning, before the first burning messenger of daylight had stolen out from the blue waters of the Gulf and glinted his way into Shorty's bedchamber, that product of Boston's winters had awakened, gasping, to a realization of the fact that a "scorcher" was coming. Concurrently the Señor Inspector, stirring languidly in his hammock, felt the hot breath of Equatora Caliente on his brow. Five minutes later the two met in front of M'sieu Delagrade's refrigerator. Ten minutes later—the hiatus being occasioned by M'sieu Delagrade's unreasonable demand for cash payment—they were in possession absolute of the last piece of frozen satisfaction in the Escutor district; and the detestable announcement, "No Ice For Sale," was hanging on the veranda post of M'sieu Delagrade's Franco-American hotel.

Now—and it was well toward tiffin time—the precious pair sat luxuriously in the *posada*, sipping cool drinks from long, frost-encumbered glasses and smirking waggishly at the thirsty ones who peered through the trumpet vines, craving glacial ingredients for liquid delights. Back of the bar, where stood a humble—though treasured—row of bottles, and a small—though burglar-proof—ice-chest, M'sieu Delagrade labored dismally at the business of keeping his two ill-gotten customers supplied with refreshment; reflecting, meanwhile, that early-morning birds occasionally catch wasps instead of worms, achieving much anguish and little profit thereby!

To M'sieu's already satiated ears came the sound of Shorty's mellifluent basso, as a tale which had been long in the telling drew to an end:

JAMAICA GINGER

"—an' there sat Snowball," the resident manager was concluding, "stuck on a san'-bar full o' snakes, with quarter-mile o' 'gator swamp between him and the Main! Think he'd rouse himself an' get busy? Nothin' doin'! He'd 'a' stuck there till the last horn, crouchin' on his honkers an' moanin' some voodoo song, if I hadn't happened along in a dug-out an' taken him aboard! Jamaica ginger? Say, Manuel, there ain't no such animal! All the Jamaica ginger there ever *was* has been shipped to the States long ago, in bottles! Well, what the blink-blink do *you* want?"

This last was addressed to a small lump of animated ebony which had suddenly projected itself into the *posada* and wriggled to a position directly under Shorty's nose. "Snowball" it was—Blair's mess-boy and ever-loving disciple—but a very black and breathless Snowball, entirely unrecovered from his flight across the town.

"P-p-pullease, sare—" he panted, mouth and eyes agape; "p-p-pullease—"

"Police what?" demanded his master; "If it's ice you're after you don't get any—sabe?"

Snowball shook his head.

"Ooo, noo, sare—hit's a boot, sare!"

"A boot?"

"H'a boot, sare—blooming the—huh-huh—the Chiriqui whistle, sare!"

"A boat blowin' the company whistle?" Shorty struggled to his feet. "What you talkin' about? The steamer isn't due till Thursday!"

"'Tis no beeg steamaire, sare," panted Snowball. "'Tis, Hi think, the *Prestolite*!"

"The *Prestolite*! Good Lord!"

Through some dozen-odd tinkling glasses of refreshment the resident manager of the Chiriqui Fruit Company found himself in a fine kettle

of fish. The *Prestolite*, with the Big Chief and possibly Mazie on board, was steaming into Zapatilla. Shorty, with a *frappé* cargo of brain-disturbing "fizzers" on board, was even now due at the helm of his welcoming launch, speeding seaward. Thus do the inexorable wheels of Fate, which commonly move with languor and comparative precision down near the equator, spasmodically awake to violent action, seize the coat-tails of the careless one, and whirl him viciously away into the melting pot—which may, or may not, reduce him to ashes, depending altogether upon his ability or inability to scramble out again!

Fourteen months had passed since Shorty Blair had first gazed, with mingled curiosity and metropolitan disapproval, upon the sand-supported village of Zapatilla. Thirteen months and twenty-nine days had elapsed since he and Carter Cunningham had assured each other—in dulcet, yet none the less impressive, tones and terms—that they could best conserve the interests of their respective companies by keeping out of each other's way whenever possible. Twelve months had fled since Carter Cunningham had addressed his first carefully-worded protest against Blair's "misdirected activities," and thereby earned for himself the undying contempt and scorn of Miss Madelaine Pressly; to whom, after exacting a promise of silence, her president-father had read the document.

As a matter of fact Shorty Blair had made good, with a copper-plated G. The powers up north had no fault to find with conditions at Zapatilla, insofar as his stewardship was concerned. The grade of his fruit had gone up, and the cost of production had gone down. The plantations were in better condition, even, than those of the Consoli-

dated; and reports on his cargoes sent Cunningham into paroxysms of rage and envy. "He'll blanket me in another year," that individual had said to himself, at the end of Blair's first month in Zapatilla—and forthwith the Consolidated manager redoubled his efforts to "grease the skids" under his contemporary and gently ease the stocky one back into the turgid waters of oblivion from which, in Cunningham's estimation, he had sprung.

III

Aided by Snowball, a five-minute shower and certain expletives filled with sedative possibilities, Shorty managed a fairly commendable toilet, whisked himself into white duck, and was well down the bay in his speed-boat *Hasty Pudding*, before the yacht had rounded Drago Point and stood in toward an anchorage. Minutes ahead of him, though, swished another launch, bearing Carter Cunningham, zealous for first audience with the three-tailed bashaw of Bananaland. As the bow of the *Prestolite* swung gracefully in toward Christobal Cay, and the glistening brass anchor splashed bottomward to the coral, Cunningham's boat ranged alongside. Followed by Dr. Schott of the quarantine office and Victor Ramirez, first assistant inspector of the port, the Consolidated man sprang aboard the yacht—nor did any of the trio, so great was their eagerness to see the Big Chief, deign to look back. Had they done so they might have seen the *Hasty Pudding* rounding the point; instead of which Cunningham muttered joyously, "He's spiked!"

Because Carter Cunningham beat Shorty Blair to the side of Mylo B. Pressly's yacht there was no Mazie leaning over the rail of that trim, little vessel when the *Hasty Pud-*

ding bumped into the accommodation ladder and Shorty ran whistling up the steps. Instead, she was standing beside her father's chair on the after-deck, facing Cunningham and his confederates, who were making the most of Blair's unexplained absence on board—albeit, they said, the latter was certainly in Zapatilla—drinking, in fact, at Delagrade's hotel an hour since. The doctor and the assistant inspector could swear to this, could they not? Aye, they not only could but promptly did—the doctor being heavily mortgaged to the Consolidated manager by reason of sundry unfilled "straights" and "flushes," and the assistant inspector being characteristically eager to supplant his superior, the tipping Aguilerez, in the good graces of the powerful Americano!

"I don't believe a word of it," declared the girl, brimming with indignation; "you've said yourself, father, that he's made a record down here that even—"

Her father raised a hand.

"Yes, he has made a record," said Carter Cunningham, quickly, "by having chummed with the niggers until they'll work just as hard for him, whether he's drunk or sober!"

"That's very evidently more than they do for you, Mr. Cunningham!" Mazie's voice burned with rebuke.

"Perhaps—but it isn't discipline," insisted her one-time suitor.

"You say Blair—ah—boozes continuously?" queried the president.

"Well, hardly that strong," Cunningham answered.

"That was the inference to be drawn from your letters," said Pressly. "I almost recalled him without investigation," he added.

Cunningham winced. Time was when his word had been sufficient to spell the doom of those employees in

the tropics who fell afoul of his displeasure.

"Blair has reformed, somewhat," he admitted, weakly, "but he isn't to be depended upon! Besides, he has disrupted our organization down here to such a point that the Jamaicans are almost beyond control! Half the time he has 'em out playing football, or something like it, down by the old ice factory. Today, for example—"

"He's drunk as a lord, eh, Cunningham? Spreading the glad tidings, as usual? Hello, Mazie! Mr. Pressly, your humble servant!"

The subject of the conversation had approached on tip-toe, anticipating a pleasant surprise all around. Now he stood behind them, brown and bearded, but immaculate in his white ducks, a twinkling smile in his eyes. The quick run across the water, with salt spray dashing in his face all the way, had brought him thoroughly to himself.

"Buffer!" exclaimed the girl, rushing toward him. Pa Pressly glanced up with an amused, half-perplexed expression on his face. Cunningham and his associates whirled about in astonishment.

"How the deuce—" began the Consolidated manager.

"Drunkard's luck, Carter!" interrupted Shorty, sarcastically; "we lushers have a habit of doing the unexpected!"

"I thought I told you boys to work in harmony?" said the president, severely.

"Oh, this is all a little joke of Carter's and mine," asserted Shorty, looking his employer squarely in the eye; "fact is, Mr. Pressly, we're so tickled to see you that we don't know what we're saying—do we, Carter?"

Cunningham, anxious to smooth things over a bit, murmured an assent. Pa Pressly smiled sagely.

"We will discuss it later," he said to Blair. "You run along forward with Madelaine now—I want a few moments with these gentlemen!"

What passed between the president and his truculent trio, there on the after-deck of the *Prestolite*, will probably never be known, save to those four—but Carter Cunningham went very disconsolately over the side an hour or so later, and his companions were even less cheerful.

"I'll spike him, if it takes a leg!" muttered Cunningham, as he threw himself into his launch; and just then a merry peal of girl's laughter, followed by a man's chuckling roar, sounded from where Mazie and Shorty were ensconced, far up in the prow of the yacht.

Some considerable time after Cunningham had left, Shorty finally managed to tear himself away. The lights were already twinkling along the shore and Pa Pressly was tubing in his private suite.

"See you to-night, Shorty," he called, between splashes. Apparently the Big Chief had not, as yet, gone over to the enemy!

"All right, sir," responded Blair, cheerily: "I'm having a few folks in to meet you, you know."

"Not many, Blair—and no all-night flub-dubs!" exclaimed Pa Pressly.

"Nothing like that," Shorty answered; and, with a farewell salutation to Mazie (twilight had fallen; you may draw your own conclusions) he departed shoreward in the *Hasty Pudding*.

IV

The office buildings of the Chiriqui and Consolidated companies were—fortunately, in many respects—situated at opposite ends of the single street of Zapatilla. Like the rest of the business houses in that rickety banana town, they were

built on copper-sheathed pilings, half in and half out of the water. Thus, while officially they "faced" on El Camino Real, they actually fronted on the water, access to which was had by an uninterrupted line of wharves, which stretched from one end of the town to the other. The downstairs portion of Blair's building housed the offices of the Chiriqui; upstairs, Shorty and two of his clerks kept bachelor quarters in six well-favored rooms, encircled by a wide porch-gallery. Here Snowball and his mahogany mother labored zealously to preserve at least a semblance of order, and to make "Master Blair" and his companions as comfortable as possible, under the circumstances.

A few moments after nine that night, with a great tropic moon looking on, the tender of the *Prestolite* slipped noiselessly alongside the Chiriqui wharf and noiselessly away again, leaving the Presslys and Captain Traskett of the yacht to stand silent on the wharf for a moment, watching the pleasant picture on the balcony above and listening to the babble of Spanish and English voices; then to mount the stairway to the Blair ménage. Assembled there, and overflowing out on the gallery, the distinguished guests found the leading Spanish and American officials and residents of Zapatilla—Señor Mureno, the *alcalde*; Señor Aguilerez, of the day's ice-adventure; Capitan Alvarez, of the *cuartel*; Fritz Holdt, the German Consul; Riley, America's representative; Doctor Drury, of the Company hospital; and scores of lesser lights, all eager to see—and to be seen. Six ladies—Zapatilla's complete Caucasian complement—were also on hand, ready to do honor to the daughter of their yeomen's overlord, whether she liked it or not. Shorty, of course, was

"hosting," as he described it. Cunningham alone was absent.

"I asked him," Blair explained, as he welcomed the trio, "but he turned me down!"

"Yes," said Pressly quietly, "Carter is busy to-night."

"Diggin' up evidence, I suppose?" sniffed Shorty.

"I suppose," replied his employer, in a tone which dismissed the subject. A moment later they were in the midst of the throng.

"At any rate, he hasn't made us unpopular," Mazie contrived to whisper to her father, before the six ladies bore her away; but Pa Pressly affected not to hear her.

An hour hurried by. Everything was progressing "beautifully," according to Miss Pressly's *sotto voce* report to Mr. Blair. One by one the Spanish and American officials were confidentially assuring President Pressly that Señor Blair was by long odds the finest little banana manager south of Labrador. Although he believed less than half of their extravagances, the dictator was rapidly coming to the opinion that Shorty at least knew how to win men's confidence and esteem—which is more than something below the tenth degree of latitude in the western hemisphere!

Suddenly, high above the hum of talk, there resounded a crashing explosion—then another—and another—then three in chorus. The conversation died aborning. Dismay supplanted complacency. They all knew that sound. Gasoline drums! They all knew what made gasoline drums explode. Heat! And they all knew the only kind of heat that could reach gasoline drums at night. Fire! And "Fire!" in Zapatilla meant disaster in its direst form—homes, mayhap children, in peril; provisions, mayhap to the very last sack and can, at stake;

clothing, save only the finery they had on their backs, threatened; wharves, launches, records, and all that made life in Zapatilla bearable, or even possible, exposed to obliteration and disintegration with little or no chance of escape.

"Look!" cried Blair, who had sprung to a side window.

Dazedly they crowded around him, gazing down the shore-line in the direction of the Consolidated offices. Moonless night had fallen on Zapatilla—but the glare from a thousand tongues of flame relighted the panorama almost as brightly as had the noonday sun. Sky-high and town-wide, a pitiless army of flames was advancing with fearful speed toward the watchers at Blair's window. Before the oncoming demons fled the residents of the town—hatless, shoeless, empty-handed, leaving all save life behind—to the accompaniment of crackling volleys of fire- noises and the occasional dull boom of the gasoline. Truly, thought Mylo B. Pressly, a certain American general's description of war applies most aptly to fire in a Central American banana port!

Fire, freed from restraint and spreading along the line of least resistance, is bad enough in your steel-and-concrete municipalities; your piped and reservoird towns; your chemical-engined, volunteer-hose-companied villages. To dwellers in a pumpless, dried-wood, equatorial beach-town like Zapatilla, with the sea in front and the jungle behind, and approximately a thousand double drums of gasoline stowed away in various and sundry inaccessible corners of the buildings along the waterfront, "Fire!" is a more dreaded alarm than earthquake, hurricane or even yellow fever. Usually it spells *omega*!

For approximately ten seconds—possibly fifteen—Shorty stared spell-

bound at the approaching flames. Then his scattered wits foregathered and he leaped into action. "Grid-iron gyrations!" he muttered, grimly; "well, here's where they get a test! Here's a real young gridiron, or I'm a Turk! Now we'll see what these Jamaics are good for!"

He turned to the assembled guests.

"Out of here!" he cried to the men, waving his arms. "Find your families, quick. Bring 'em here—into my boat—out to the *Prestolite*—then beat it back here for more!"

"But Shorty—" interposed Pa Pressly.

"No interference!" bawled Shorty, with fierce joy. "Get Mazie into that launch! Take the women, ten at a time, to the yacht! Send your crew ashore to me! Skip!"

"Aye, aye, general," responded the director of destinies for Central America, touching his hat with mock deference. But he smiled approvingly as Shorty disappeared down the stairs, yelling: "Snowball! Snowball! Where's those dinged niggers of mine?"

The next hour in Zapatilla was the busiest sixty minutes that isolated little hamlet had ever known. While President Pressly, aided by a dozen American, Spanish and native officials, assembled the women and children at the waterfront and rushed them out to the *Prestolite* in Blair's power-boat, the young Chiriqui manager assembled a hundred blacks, who appeared somewhat mysteriously at his street-door within ten minutes after the first alarm, and hurled them into the path of the conflagration.

Strangely enough, these men were armed with shining fire-axes, and showed no little skill in clearing a transverse space just flameward of the Chiriqui offices, across which the blaze subsequently had difficulty in effecting a passage.

Stranger yet, when one daring brand accomplished the leap, and surreptitiously ignited a pile of *debris* on the unburned side of the clearing, this new enemy was met by a perfectly organized bucket brigade, armed with new galvanized-iron pails and stretching from the beach to the endangered point, which deluged the embryo conflagration so rapidly and so thoroughly that the latter promptly gave up the ghost.

Strangest of all, however—and this Mylo B. Pressly saw through his own binoculars from the bridge of the yacht—was the picture of Blair and Snowball, their faces muffled with wet cloths, staggering through the fire-swept area from the ruins of the Consolidated offices, with a limp form hanging from their shoulders! "How did they get 'way down there?" Pa Pressly first asked himself; and then, "How are they ever going to get back?" Nor did he venture to confide to his daughter what he was seeing, though the latter stood immediately beside him, straining her eyes into the pyre.

Twice Shorty stumbled and almost fell—but Snowball, by assuming the full weight of their burden, enabled him to regain his balance and press on. Twice did canisters of broiling gasoline explode almost beneath their feet—but a merciful Providence shielded them from the flying splinters as they battled through the flame and smoke.

Twenty feet from the cleared ground, Snowball uttered a shriek of pain, as a long splinter of charred wood pierced his worn-out shoe and ran inches into his foot. He fell headlong, carrying Blair and the insensible Carter Cunningham with him to the embered ground. Before the flames could claim their victims, however, a dozen stalwart blacks leaped across the intervening space and dragged the trio to safety.

"Knew he was there—compilin' evidence! Had to get him—was just in time—tell th' Chief," Shorty mumbled, as tender hands raised him up; then he lost consciousness and was borne gently aboard the *Hasty Pudding*, where his mess-boy and the Consolidated manager already lay gasping. The boat sped off toward the *Prestolite*.

There, of course, Madelaine Pressly heard the whole story—and sad, indeed, would have been the lot of the man who traduced Shorty Blair, were it not that he had already been hardly dealt with and was in a fair way to die. Because of this, Carter Cunningham received almost the same tender care from Mazie and the women of Zapatilla as did Shorty Blair and his ebony mess-boy, Snowball—but not quite.

About the same time that Doctor Drury, on the *Prestolite*, was saying to President Pressly: "Yes, I think they will all pull through!" a cry from the watchers on the yacht signified that the fire was vanquished—stopped within fifty yards of the Chiriqui offices by Shorty's crew of dusky fire-laddies and their specially imported brand of "Jamaica ginger!"

V

"The time has come," said Madelaine Pressly, pompously, "for the witness to explain to the judge and jury just how he managed to do it!" She leaned her elbows on the tea-table, placed the tips of her tiny fingers together in a most judicial sort of way, and frowned across at him. Cunningham and Pa Pressly stirred in their deck-chairs as though they, too, would like to hear the story. It was three days later, and the quartet—two bandaged resident managers, a doting director of destinies, and a girl—sat on the after-deck of the *Prestolite*, gazing shore-

ward at the smoldering pile of ruins which had once been the greater portion of the Central American banana port called Zapatilla.

"It was Snowball's idea, first," explained the linen-wrapped manager of the Chiriqui. "He pointed out the danger of the blaze, and said the boys wanted to learn how to protect the office in case it came. After that," and Shorty smiled beneath his oil-soaked bandages, "I just applied 'gridiron gyrations'—you know what I mean, Mr. Pressly—and the chocolate-drops did the rest!"

"But the axes—and the pails?" queried the president, his eyes twinkling at Blair's allusion to their former conversation.

"Got 'em in instalments—snuck 'em in on requisitions, one or two at a time," admitted Shorty; and his employer laughed outright.

"I would have been done for in another ten minutes, Blair," sighed Cunningham, his conscience weighing heavily upon him.

"Oh—that!" Shorty raised his bandaged hands. "'Fraid you'll have to thank Snowball for that, too, Cunningham! He rowed me down the shore in his dug-out, boosted me over the sill into your shack and intended to paddle back with the pair of us—but the blamed rope burned through and the canoe got away!"

"And to think that I was—" began Cunningham.

"Forget it, Carter," interrupted Blair. "We've been under fire together since then, man! Now we'll start all over again—eh?"

"But I—"

"Tell it to Snowball," laughed Shorty; "here he comes now!"

A small lump of animated ebony, framed in gauze bandages and propelling himself awkwardly on a new pair of crutches, approached respectfully from the forward part of the

yacht. "Well," demanded Shorty, with mock severity, "what the blink-blink do *you* want?"

"P-p-pullease, sare, hit's a boot, sare!"

"A boot?"

"Hit's a boot, sare, blooming the Chiriqui whistle, sare!"

"By George!" exclaimed Shorty, "this is steamer day!"

"P-p-pullease, sare, de boys say you git yo'self well, sare—dey is prepared to embark de fruit thees time wit'out your supervision, sare!"

"You're crazy!" said Blair, affectionately.

"No, Shorty," interrupted Pa Pressly, "he's absolutely right! Fact is, you're through for awhile!" He turned to the black boy. "Snowball, I want you to go ashore and pack Mr. Blair's things—and your own—for a trip. Understand?"

"Y-y-yess, sare," responded the delighted Jamaica boy, executing a lightning pivot on his new "legs."

"Am I fired?" demanded Shorty.

"That's just it—*fired!*" Pa Pressly smiled indulgently on the invalid. "But I've another job for you up home—harder work and less freedom, but fairly remunerative and congenial!"

"What is it?" again demanded the man who had "licked Yale."

In answer Pa Pressly brought from his pocket what Blair recognized as the collar he had been wearing the night of the fire. It was wilted and blackened and torn—but Pa Pressly handled it as though it were the handkerchief of Veronica. From another pocket he produced a bit of black crayon, with which he proceeded to make a large and unmistakable "O.K." on the remaining clean spot of the collar—then he passed it solemnly to his daughter.

"Please take that over to Mr. Blair, my dear," he said quietly.

A TURKISH MOTHER

THE VENERATION OF MOTHERHOOD IN THE SULTAN'S REALM—REVERENCE FOR THE MOTHER-IN-LAW

By GRACE ELLISON

Author of "An Englishwoman in a Turkish Harem."

I HAVE been this afternoon with Fâtima buying "birth" presents. In a Moslem house it is difficult to find a more appropriate name for these presents, which correspond to our christening presents. These "birth" presents, however, were not only for a little new arrival in this world, but for the dear friend to whom this little life was to be entrusted.

This custom of honoring the mother as well as the child, insignificant though it may seem, is only one of the few ways in which homage is paid to the mother in the East. Here all maternity is respected. Not only the married mother, but the unmarried mother, is respected, so that the woman who is left with the "child of her shame" to do the best she can for it and herself, does not yet exist in Turkey. It is true the Turks do not consider their women "responsible" for either their good or bad conduct, however much freedom Islam gives them. In this, as in most things, we and the Turks are at the Antipodes. According to the Moslem law, a woman has absolute control of her own fortune; she can exercise any profession she likes; but when it is a question of a misdeed—theft, for example—the husband is responsible. I do not defend the Turkish system—nor do I defend ours, and the Turkish women themselves now recognize they must be accounted responsible for their good and their bad deeds.

To understand the importance given to maternity, one must have lived for a while in the East. Mahomet placed maternity above everything else when he said "Paradise was at the mother's feet." In the highest circles and in the poor man's house the mother rules. As *cadines* (wives) the Sultan's legitimate wives do not count socially, yet if the son of one of them becomes Sultan, she then is the highest lady in the land—the *Validé-Sultana*, to whom all petitions from the women to the Imperial Master must be addressed. She is the head of the Ottoman Court, the only woman before whom the Sultan kneels.

And so in private life, the relations between mother and son are not the same as with us. There are always reverence and respect for her as well as love. She is not the "old mater," nor would he allow her to wait on him. However great a scoundrel a man may be, however deep his hands may be steeped in blood, he will rise when his mother comes into the room, kiss her hand, then raise it to his forehead as a sign of great respect, and inquire for the health of *Annajim* (my dear mother), and give her the seat of honor.

In the homes of the people, in the two-roomed cabins in Asia Minor, and where they still eat out of one dish, helping themselves with their fingers, the son will only take his share when he is sure his mother has taken a substantial helping. The law

of Islam obliges a man to keep his mother, and his wife accepts this as a matter of course.

A young Turkish woman who marries and has her own establishment, as with us, is the exception rather than the rule, and, personally, amongst all the women with whom I am acquainted, I know no one who does not live either with her husband's or her own parents. Some parents make the stipulation before consenting to their daughter's marriage that she shall still live with them, and I have met some parents who have refused good marriages for their daughters simply because they could not allow them to leave their home. The Turkish mother urges her son to marry as soon as possible. He marries before he can even keep himself. His relatives see nothing extraordinary in the fact that they have not only to keep him, but his wife and family.

"And the mother-in-law?" one naturally asks. The relationship between a Turkish mother-in-law and her daughter-in-law is quite different from the relationship existing in the West. My hostess and her mother-in-law remind me not a little of Ruth and Naomi. The daughter-in-law treats her husband's mother just as she would treat her own mother: *i.e.* she has the same position towards her mother-in-law that she had towards her own mother before marriage. It is the mother-in-law who is the head of the house, the mother-in-law who sits in the place of honor, the mother-in-law who is first greeted, the mother-in-law who gives permission to do such and such a thing, and who is called by her daughter-in-law Hanoum Effendi (honored lady).

My friend cannot understand how difficult it would be for a daughter-in-law in England to live with her husband's mother, nor can she un-

derstand the tactless Western woman who expects a mother-in-law, her superior in age and experience, to give over the household to her son's wife. "My turn will come, alas! only too soon," one lady said, "when I become a mother-in-law, then I expect my daughter-in-law to treat me as I have treated my husband's mother—to love and respect me, and not to make of me a subject of ridicule." I must say it is difficult to think of the sweet-faced woman who sits at the head of our table as a mother-in-law in the Western sense of the word. She effaces herself with exquisite tact; absents herself when she thinks her presence unnecessary—for example, at our harem tea parties; gives advice only when it is asked; and is always ready to show how grateful she is to have gained a daughter and not lost her son.

It is curious and astonishing to see this woman of another generation not understanding in the least her daughter-in-law's civilization and culture and yet accepting it as perfectly all right. After the midday meal her prayer carpet is taken out of the cupboard and laid for her on the floor of her room, her shoes are removed, she performs her ablutions, veils her hair, and prays in the picturesque manner of the East. She obeys the teaching of Mahomet in the letter and not in the spirit; yet if it enters her head to wonder why her daughter-in-law performs none of the prescribed religious duties she never makes a remark.

When the young Bey's brother officers dine with us she absents herself from the table, but although nothing would induce her to be present, she sees no reason for her daughter-in-law not presiding at the table. Is it, I wonder, a broad mind which understands without understanding, or is it a supreme trust in her son, that he will only allow his

wife to do those things which are right, or is it fatalism, a resignation to put up with what you cannot change? At any rate, the smooth working of a ménage of women of totally different centuries, the possibility of their living together in perfect peace and affection, shows there must be sacrifice on both sides, and a tact and diplomacy, which we do not possess.

It might be argued, the Turkish bride is of the mother-in-law's choosing. Generally yes, but not always. In a marriage *à la Turquie* the bridegroom takes on trust her whom his mother chooses for him. He is usually content with the choice, or, if he is not, he accepts her as his written fate and makes the best of the situation. But since the Turkish man has become accustomed to Western civilization he no longer will marry *à la Turquie*, and since the customs of the country do not allow a man to see and speak with the woman he is to marry, many of them prefer to marry a European.

A Turk recently told me you could not expect a thinking Turkish man to make a real Turkish marriage. He does not want a plaything—he wants a companion, and Europe affords him the possibility of at least knowing the woman he is to marry. To me it seems a dangerous and unsatisfactory way of solving the woman question. Turks who have acted otherwise have in general linked their existences with that of not the best class of European society, to put it rather mildly. In fact, so serious did it become that a short while ago the then Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs issued an order forbidding Turkish diplomatists to marry without the consent of their government. Truly a wise measure. All details are required by the Turkish Government of the young lady's Embassy, and marriage without the Govern-

ment's consent means dismissal from the service.

When the Turkish woman has a foreign daughter-in-law, the ménage does not always run on smooth lines. The European is unable to adapt herself to her new surroundings, she does not take the trouble to understand the working of an entirely new civilization. . . . I have in these cases, however, always admired the forbearance and tact of the Turkish woman.

The modern Turkish woman demands the privilege of talking with her future husband before her fate is signed and sealed. She does not have the opportunity of knowing him as we Anglo-Saxons know our future husbands, but she can at least know whether he will "get on her nerves," in which case she refuses to marry him. Judging, however, as she still does, by instinct, she generally chooses a man whom she at least can respect and a man whose physical appearance pleases her. Many women, however, have owed to me that they accepted their husbands not with any feeling of gratitude or delight, but rather with one of profound thankfulness they were no worse.

Most emphatically I disapprove of marriages between men of the East and women of the West, not because I do not think Turkish men good husbands and fathers, not because I do not consider them honest, upright men, but because I always see in one of these unions, if not disaster for the young couple themselves, at least disenchantment for the children of these unions.

When discussing this subject seriously with a Turkish man who honored me by asking my advice about his proposed marriage with a foreign lady, he confessed he preferred to marry a Mohammedan lady, but the "veil" placed too many obstacles in

the way of his enjoying her companionship. "Why not marry a Turkish woman and give her her freedom?" "No," he answered, "the women must go slowly; I shall be in my grave before they are free."

If ever a Turkish woman wanted an argument in favor of a strong militant movement, she has it in the colossal egoism of men like this. Had she the courage to break her fetters, then he would honor her with his protection, but since she has not, the foreigner, often the Turkish woman's social inferior, becomes his life companion. The law of Islam, or at least one interpretation of the law of Islam, refuses to allow a Turkish woman to marry any but a Mohammedan, whereas a Moslem man may marry a Christian woman; the woman now understands the slight this is to her sex and intelligence.

Since Turkish women cannot retaliate, then, by marrying a man of the West, how are they to accept the challenge other than by fighting for freedom?

I have so often sighed here for the daring of some of my countrywomen, inconsistent as it may seem. What these women need is a strong woman at their head—a strong, responsible woman, with a definite program, and able to gain the confidence of her sex. It is the circumstances which make the hero or heroine. "I am such an one as my age requireth," says the Book of Judith. It was the Hamidian régime which made Enver Pasha—there will come, most surely, a woman leader, and that moment may not be far off.

With a feeling of thankfulness that her husband is no worse, the Turkish woman (there are exceptions, of course) naturally stakes everything on maternity. That there should be women in the West who actually refuse to have children is

incomprehensible to my friends, and that there are women who for the sake of their ease give their children to strangers to nurse is almost as incomprehensible.

"What have we Eastern women in common with you women of the West—not even the heart," said a Turkish woman to me one day as she caressed the little curly-headed girl who played at her knees. She added, "All my life's happiness is in that little form; my greatest sorrow was when I found it was physically impossible to nurse her, and every time I hear her call her foster-mother 'Anna' (mother), a name no doubt she deserves, I have just a tiny pain at my heart." And yet how good she is to this poor peasant woman. She had been deserted by her husband, her own child died a few days after its birth. "You understand," she went on, "she will stay with me as long as ever she likes. She has been too good to my child for me ever to leave her without a home."

Aïche-Hanoum, the mother-to-be, for whom we bought presents, has been the subject of conversation for weeks past. To her all kinds of delicacies are sent, the most comfortable place is reserved for her in the harem, there is always some one to tuck her up amongst the cushions. How tenderly she is spoken of, how tenderly she is spoken to . . . in a short while Aïche will be called to fulfill the divine mission (according to the East) for which every woman was sent into the world. Then her outlook on life will be different. She will have a different position towards her friends; it is almost as if she had, as it were, risen in the social scale.

We went to visit Aïche, the very day the little new arrival was expected. "In all probability we shall

stay all night," said my friend before we started. "But shall we not be in the way?" I asked. "Of course not," she replied. "How happy Aiche will be to feel we are there; we Turkish women always take part in one another's joys and sorrows."

With my British fear of being in the way where I was certainly of no use, I took my place with the other six friends of Aiche who had come to be present at this very important moment in her life's history.

We were seated round the big mangol alternately drinking coffee (which we ourselves made on the red-hot charcoal), smoking and eating sweets. Two of the ladies had bound their heads up with handkerchiefs to prevent their having headaches, a precaution I did not imitate however much my friends advised me to do so. We did not speak. We just sat round the mangol waiting, waiting. . . .

I occupied the most comfortable of the *mussaffir's* rooms (guests' rooms) that night, for the other guests' beds were made on mattresses on the floor, in the Eastern uncereemonious fashion. I should have preferred to occupy one of these "emergency" beds—they are perfectly comfortable—for in the guests' room when I finally sank to rest after the safe arrival of the little girl, I had the same uncomfortable feeling of the unnecessary trouble I was giving.

But the Eastern woman has not yet begun what we in the West know as "the servant trouble." With the abolition of slavery, however, this is on its way. When all the slaves in Fâtima's family are married, she must necessarily employ hired domestics; with education "hired domestics" become refractory. They will object to making coffee and emergency beds at all times and at all hours, then "good-bye" to the charming uncereemonious hospitality of the

East. . . . I asked a Turkish lady who had lived for some months in London what she most appreciated in our capital. "What I know best," she answered, "is Mrs. —'s registry office for servants."

The next afternoon a host of friends and acquaintances arrived to pay a visit to the mother and the little girl. In my country the doctor and the nurse would have forbidden these visits as the height of imprudence; here "it is a matter of habit." It is true the visitors, in most cases, only passed in a procession before the mother and child, but even that seemed unnecessary fatigue for the mother, much as I was assured to the contrary.

The mother and daughter were picturesquely arranged. The mother, in her big bed, covered with a priceless embroidery, and the child, in a smaller bed, covered with a smaller quilt of the same priceless embroidery, peacefully sleeping, and a French Sister of Mercy, with her big white *cornet*, playing the part of nurse. It was a pretty picture—a picture which brought tears of emotion to the eyes of the visitors. It is an old and beautiful masterpiece—the mother and her child—all the world over, and a masterpiece at which every true woman looks again and again, and always with delight.

All the guests brought presents for the mother and child, according to their means. Some were of the greatest value—jewels, embroideries, stuffs—and Fâtima tells me her "birth" presents formed a very important part of her trousseau. But why, at a Turkish birth ceremony, is cinnamon syrup given to the guests? No one can tell me. To me this beverage is the only unpleasant feature of a most charming ceremony.

They called her "Melek" (Angel), the little girl. I made a sign of the

Cross on her little forehead. Her mother was pleased. And as I made that sign I wondered why our Western mothers are not honored as they

are in the East. Christ paid as high a tribute to maternity as Mahomet. Who is responsible for the misinterpretation of His words?



THE TAMING OF AUNT MARIA

BY THOMAS ADDISON

MAN may choose his friends, but his relatives are wished on him. This is why he makes the best of them—his relatives—when he can; when he can't he makes a jest of them.

Young Mr. Arthur Brown of Belrose, Massachusetts, and late of Harvard, U.S.A., did this latter thing. There was no earthly reason why he should, for he was exceptionally lucky in his blood kin; he had only two near enough to be a nuisance. But we shall come to that.

Mr. Brown met young Mr. Josephus Jenks prowling around Panama, as he himself was doing, watching how they let the boats through the Big Ditch. Everybody has heard and many of us have eaten of Jenks' Jersey Pickles. They are famous and fearfully fatal to the gastric processes. To place Josephus at once it is simply necessary to say he was the only son of this particular Jenks—a tall, wide-shouldered, blond college dandy with an engaging smile and an air quite foreign to the aroma of pickles. He had wrested a B.A. from Princeton after a frightful tussle in the finals,

and was now taking a peep at the world before entering his father's office to learn the business. He would have been in Europe had he not felt convinced that conditions over there were not productive of the quiet his system craved. So Mr. Jenks was forced to content himself with poking about among the crude attractions of his Motherland.

They came home together on the same boat to New York, Messrs. Brown and Jenks, and shared the same stateroom. There were no attractive girls on the unhappy craft, nobody who promised fun. The two were reduced for amusement to the bare basis of their own conversation—a sorrowful plight for a pair of rogues whose greatest joy in life was to "start something."

Now, so strange are the ways of Fate that the idle chatter of Arthur and Josephus one day in the smoking-room led to a week of wild experiences for Arthur's next of kin. In short, the twain did "start something," though in the beginning they were innocent as nursing babes of any such high intention. Note how it happened.

"That poor little beggar, Harold,

or whatever his name is, stopped me for a cigarette again this morning," observed Arthur lazily, and for want of a better theme. "Hid himself somewhere and smoked it; afraid his women folk would catch him at it. *Verboten*, you know."

Josephus merely snorted; he was lighting a fresh pipe. Arthur continued:

"They think he has lung trouble, so Harold says, and send in a hurryup for the doctor every time he does a cough. But he claims he can run a horse to death."

"Huh!" scoffed Josephus, now comfortably under way. "The chap is almost ripe enough to vote. He ought to be ashamed of himself, letting 'em lead him around like a monkey on a string." And he added, cheerfully mixing his metaphors: "They've made a jellyfish of him."

"What can he do about it?" asked Arthur, for the sake of argument. "You say they've made a jellyfish of him. All right. They couldn't do it in a day; they've been years at it. He's been hectored and coddled and driven till he finds it easier to submit than rebel."

Mr. Jenks hooted the idea.

"Piffle! He hasn't any sand in him, that's the trouble. Why, when I was his age—!" Mr. Jenks made a large gesture with his pipestem to indicate how utterly untrammelled were his actions in the dim past to which he had reference.

Arthur studied his friend curiously. There was a sudden show of interest in his tone when he spoke.

"Got any women in the house at home, Jenks?"

"There's the mater," said Jenks; and then, reflectively: "But I'm rather afraid I've bullied her from the start."

"Haven't any aunts, say, who took a hand in bringing you up?" persisted Arthur.

"No."

"I have two. Fine as silk, but not like mothers. Love a fellow, but from a different viewpoint. Want to boss you. Get my drift?"

"Oh!" exclaimed Josephus softly. "Harold in another binding, revised and edited, with explanatory notes."

He grinned at Arthur maliciously. Arthur returned it. The germ of an idea had found lodgment in his mind.

"I'd like to see you in my boots for a day," he rejoined. "I inherited my aunts along with the old home. They are maiden ladies. Aunt Maria has kept the house for years—ever since mother died, when I was a little chap. She ran it for father, and ran him with it, until he died. I've simply stepped into father's place and assumed his domestic liabilities. She runs me, too. And she runs Aunt Gloria. She's younger. Aunt Maria"—his eyes twinkled—"looks on her as a child; as she does me. We both have to mind our p's and q's when Aunt Maria speaks."

"Um," grunted Josephus. He was afraid to venture more. A man's relatives may be a frightful bore, and usually are, but to criticize them to his face is another matter.

Arthur, watching his companion slyly, pursued his theme:

"Aunt Maria would die on the rack for me. I really believe it; but she would call me in to witness what she was suffering for my sake. And she would pass away in the firm conviction that without her restraining influence I would fall a prey to my own disordered fancies. And Aunt Gloria! O Lord!"

He selected a cigarette from his case, tapped it on his hand, and touched a match to it. Josephus did not take advantage of the pause, so he went on:

"Aunt Maria is well over fifty,

and she's been developing her will power since she was two months old. There is nothing uncertain about Aunt Maria. She lives by a code. If you are late to breakfast it's a crime, and if you don't believe in goose grease for the quinsy it's treason. She kept a cat till somebody told her it carried germs, and she won't have a dog around because of fleas. She abominates a pipe, and—"

"That's enough!" cut in Josephus. "I've got her. And Aunt Gloria—a faded, prayerful, tearful little body in rustling silk and mourning for a lost love way back yonder somewhere. I've read about the kind."

He stopped, and feared he had gone too far at that. But Arthur only laughed. He appeared to be highly diverted.

"All right. What can I do about it? It's the tyranny of love—"

"Tyranny of nothing!" Josephus broke in on him again, and this time, encouraged by the laugh, he gave rein to his thoughts. "It's selfishness! Hang it, man, it's the drowning clutch of the passing generation on the new. You've got to tear loose from it or it will drag you down!"

"You are generalizing, old chap," countered Arthur. "Come to cases. Mine's a specific one. Put yourself in my place. What would you do to emancipate yourself?"

Josephus chuckled. He was conjuring up a frolicsome vision in his mind.

"I'd start in," he said slowly, "and give those two old ladies a shaking up they wouldn't soon forget. I'd make 'em over again. By George, I'd humanize 'em!"

"You think you would, but when Aunt Maria impaled you with a cold, gray eye, and when Aunt Gloria's lip began to tremble—"

"Pish!" ejaculated Mr. Jenks. "I'd be doing it for their good, and

I'd put it through. You could live with them afterward. They'd eat out of your hand."

A smile passed over Arthur's face.

"I've got a hundred to say you couldn't put it across," he challenged.

Josephus took a good look at him.

"You are funning!"

"Never was farther from it."

"But how the deuce could you work me in? I'd have to be on some sort of footing that would relieve me of the obligations of a guest. I couldn't just walk in and go at it."

"That's precisely the idea," declared Arthur in huge delight. We'll figure out the stunt together. How's your backbone?"

Josephus thought it over. As a boy a dare was a thing he could never resist. It appealed to him now. It held out the promise of a lark, and a brand new experience. Yet—

"You'd be doing me a favor," urged Arthur. "Really you would, old man. I'll buy a dog and name him for you if you win. Are you on?"

Josephus threw hesitation to the winds.

"You bet!" he answered earnestly.

II

WESTERN UNION NIGHT LETTER

NEW YORK, August 31.

TO MISS MARIA BROWN,

34 Avery Street, Belrose, Mass.

Back from Panama. Am placed in an extraordinary position. Circumstances have compelled me to lease the house for the period of one week, beginning tomorrow at noon, to a Mr. Josephus Jenks. You are not to be disturbed in the possession of your rooms. Aside from this everything is at Jenks's disposal. Try to be polite to him for my sake. He is a little odd at times. Will be home at the week-end. Love to you both.

ARTHUR.

It was at breakfast, Monday, when this amazing missive, which said much and explained nothing,

was placed in Miss Maria Brown's trembling hands. She did not faint—it was too frivolous a thing to do—but she went numb all over. Miss Gloria Brown picked up the yellow sheet from the floor. She read it, laid it back softly on the table, and tiptoed out of the room. It was not an occasion for words—not just then. They were too feeble and ineffectual as a medium of expression. Miss Gloria Brown tiptoed up the stairs to her own room, and locked the door. Then she gave way to her feelings.

Belrose is only a few miles from Boston Common, and Mr. Jenks came out to it in a motor cab. The Brown mansion is set back from the street in a shady lawn. A wide veranda embraces it on three sides with flower boxes running the entire length. Intrenched behind this floral bulwark one may receive with impunity the assault of eyes from passers-by.

Miss Maria Brown sat so intrenched when Mr. Jenks drove up. He could see the top of her silvered head as he stepped from the cab: he looked for two heads, but there was only one in sight. He closed the door and stood, watch in hand, consulting the time. It lacked five minutes of twelve. Miss Maria Brown wondered what on earth ailed the man. Miss Gloria Brown, peeping at him through the blinds of an upper window, sensed the situation and held her breath. And—she could see a dog in the taxi!

A tower clock struck somewhere, and was followed by a prolonged, discordant factory whistle. It was noon. Mr. Jenks replaced his watch in his pocket and spoke to the driver. That person, who had been fatly feed in advance, became busy on the instant. He put down on the pavement from the front seat a miscellaneous collection of bags, walking

sticks and umbrellas. This done, he swung up to a perch on the rear wheel from which vantage point he laid hands on a steamer trunk on the roof and dragged it over the guard rail to the ground.

"Take it in. Put it down anywhere," Josephus bade him in a loud voice.

The man shouldered the trunk and plodded up the walk to the house.

"Put it in the parlor—on the piano—any old place," Josephus called after him. He had the satisfaction of seeing the gray head rise high above the flowers. Miss Maria Brown was going to say something to that man.

Josephus opened the cab door; and he reached in and drew forth a dog on a chain—a blear-eyed, bow-legged French bull, with a toothy grin that would intimidate a Cossack. He reached in again and produced a parrot in a cage. With this in one hand and the dog chain in the other he sauntered up to the house. The dog, in his own language, expressed doubt of his surroundings. Josephus spoke to him.

"Behave, Fido!" he admonished the unlovely brute.

"O golly! O golly!" shrieked the parrot.

"Mary Ann, I'm ashamed of you," chided Josephus indolently.

He mounted the steps to the porch. Aunt Maria stood at the top to greet him. She wore a smile right off the ice. Fido grinned at her with the best intentions but a fearsome mien. Aunt Maria retreated a little.

"Don't mind him," Josephus adjured her. "He's got a sweet disposition when you know him." He set down the parrot and took off his hat. "This is Miss Brown?"

"Miss Maria Brown," the lady informed him.

"I thought so," acknowledged

Josephus gravely. "Brown described you to me. You have received his telegram?"

"A most astonishing one," proclaimed Miss Brown, compressing her lips. "This is Mr. Josephus Jenks, I presume."

Josephus bowed, and the cab driver coming out at this moment, he said to him:

"Put the other things in the parlor with the trunk."

The man glanced at him queerly and went on.

"I had your trunk taken up to the guest chamber," announced Maria. Her voice was full sister to her smile.

Josephus frowned.

"Brown's wire was not sufficiently explicit, I fear."

"He requested me to be polite to you; that much, at least, was clear," returned Maria with an effort at control.

"O Lord! O Lord!" screeched the parrot.

Josephus gave a start. He heard, or thought he did, a giggle close at hand. He wheeled about and saw, or thought he saw, through the wide open hall door, a flash of white disappearing into a room. He looked at Maria questioningly, but her attention was centered on the taxi man, who was coming up the steps with the bags. She opened her lips to speak to him, but Josephus was before her.

"Put 'em in the parlor on the piano," he directed. With this he addressed Maria. "I really don't care, you know, where he puts 'em, but as I chanced in the first place to say the parlor I feel obliged to stand to it. It's a family trait, and I'm afraid it makes me somewhat of a pest at times. Shall we go in?"

He suggested this with the easy courtesy of the host whose guest is in his hands. Maria felt it, and with

it a curious sense of helplessness. Yet the ruling passion rose in strong rebellion.

"The dog!" she protested. "I cannot permit him in the house."

"Oh, really now!" Josephus was suavely expostulatory. "I recollect, though, Brown said you wouldn't allow him to keep a dog. And he's fond of them, as I happen to know. Poor chap!" The taxi man, passing out, interrupted him; then he continued smoothly: "He isn't what you call a forceful character, is he? Come on, Fido. We'll see if we can find a bone for you in the pantry."

He motioned deferentially for Maria to precede him.

"Help! Help! Polly wants a cracker!" squawked the parrot.

"May I trouble someone to get Mary Ann a cracker?" entreated Jenks. "The trip has used her up, I fancy. She likes it best in coffee, with sugar and cream. And I think we will hang her in the dining-room. She's a first aid to conversation. A most accomplished bird."

Maria, speechlessly indignant, walked by him down the broad hall to a door at the rear which she closed after her with distinct emphasis. Whereupon Josephus, towing the bulldog at his heels, turned into a room at the right. It was here he had glimpsed the vanishing white dress.

It was the parlor—they still call it that in Belrose—and as his glance scoured the room it took in his bags and sticks scattered about on the piano top. It also took in, more appreciatively, a girl seated by the window. She was convulsed with smothered laughter. Josephus paused and stared at her. She, startled by his abrupt entrance, sprang up and confronted him, the laughter all gone from a very lovely face except where it lingered, not wholly conquered, in a pair of gold-brown

eyes. Josephus looked down at her, for she was small and slim, and said:

"I beg your pardon. I was not aware there were callers."

"There are none," declared the girl.

"But I thought—I was given to understand—that the family comprised only Mr. Brown's two aunts."

"It does, Mr. Jenks. I am one of them."

Josephus smiled, and he had a winning smile when he wished it.

"Oh, I say now! You are rigging me, Miss—"

"I am Gloria Brown, Arthur's aunt," the girl told him composedly.

Josephus put out a hand to the wall and braced himself. The bulldog, squatted on his haunches, regarded them solemnly. Outside on the porch the parrot raucously remarked—

"O golly! O golly! Poor Polly!"

Miss Gloria Brown's lip trembled. Arthur had said it did that, but neglected to add how utterly bewitching the effect was. It was not lost on Josephus.

"Whew!" he gasped, and dropped into a chair. "Do sit down and tell me about it," he begged. "This is so sudden."

Gloria obeyed sedately. She did not let him see her eyes. She was afraid to.

"It is quite simple," she said. "My father was married twice, the first time when he was twenty-one. He had a son by that marriage, Arthur's father, who married when he was twenty-one. My father did not marry again until late in life, after his grandson, Arthur, was born. I am the child of that marriage. I am three years younger than my nephew. Aunt Maria is my father's younger sister, Arthur's great-aunt."

She recited this evenly, though at the very close an odd little catch

crept into her voice. Josephus surveyed her critically.

"He has put one over on me and she knows it," he said to himself. Aloud he said: "Thank you. I am glad I'm not in Brown's shoes."

She raised her head at this and let her eyes dwell on him.

"The pleasure is mutual, Mr. Jenks."

"I am delighted!" Josephus rejoined with fervor. "I was afraid you wouldn't catch my point of view."

She flushed, and because she could not quell it grew angry with herself. She said coldly, rising as she did so:

"I will send Silas to you—our garage man. He will bring your bed and trunk down. Or perhaps you will prefer to sleep on the piano. It is a grand, you may have noticed, and roomy. We have thought up till now it was designed solely for entertainment, but you have enlightened us—it is also utilitarian. Possibly it is comfortable. With the strings as springs, and the cover—"

She did not finish, for Josephus, standing up to bow her out, was laughing openly.

"You score," he admitted. "It is the guest room for me. Do you know"—he searched her face—"why I am here?"

She met his gaze tranquilly.

"You have leased the house for the week, Arthur tells us."

"Is that all?"

"Arthur did not go into particulars."

"Will you make a guess at it?"

"It is not worth while," she replied indifferently; "but I should say—"

She hesitated, and he urged her on, as her desire lay:

"You should say—?"

"That your dog and your parrot needed the change."

"Oh, by Jove!" cried Josephus.

"Lunch is at two, Mr. Jenks."

She tossed the information at him over her shoulder as she left the room. Josephus caught it, as it were, and tossed it back.

"I prefer it at one, please. Will you be good enough to advise Miss Maria?"

She flashed around, head haughtily tilted. He stood bowed before her, the dog panting up at him.

"And," added Josephus pleasantly, "Fido wants a bone. Not too meaty—the doctor has warned against it. And not too fresh—a little gamy suits him better. And kindly say to your Aunt Maria I trust she won't forget Mary Ann. A cracker—in coffee, you know, with cream and sugar. Two lumps, please."

"O my! O my! What a shame!" croaked the parrot from the porch.

Gloria's head came down, and she went away without a word. If Josephus' eyes did not deceive him her shoulders were shaking.

III

MR. ARTHUR BROWN,
University Club, New York.

My Dear Brown:

In loco pæresis, or whatever my relation to you may be termed at this juncture, I take my pen in hand to dot you up to date.

Your vicarious emancipation is a thing accomplished. It was ridiculously easy. Really it was not a sporting proposition, and I'm ashamed to take the money. They fell for me from the start, though it very nearly did for Aunt Maria when I changed the lunch hour the first day from two to one, and then came in ten minutes late. I have been punctually late to every meal since, except breakfast. I have that served in my room, anywhere from eight till ten, when I ring. It keeps 'em guessing, which is good for the feminine soul. It is also good for the cook, with whom privily I have an understanding.

Billy—I should say Fido—has the run of the house, and naps on the parlor sofa. He picked it out himself. Aunt Maria took one long look at him there, and went out softly. Billy is mild as a dove,

but his countenance in slumber is not seraphic.

Mary Ann dribbles coffee and discourses wisdom from the dining-room bay-window. This fowl is so devilish *à propos* at times in what she says it's worse than murder. Aunt Maria, feinting with her left at me, remarked last night at dinner (she got it out of the *Transcript*, for a guess) that chivalry, along with Tyrean purple and some other things I can't remember, is a lost art.

"I should worry!" shouted Mary Ann; and the maid upset the salad she was handing.

Aunt Maria turned a plum color—you know, those green gages—and Aunt Gloria laughed. She'd have given a dollar not to do it. Positively she's a most diverting bird—I refer, of course, to Mary Ann.

Who invented your library? I took it at first for a mortuary chapel—nothing in it but dead writers, and a few who would be better dead. But you'll find it changed when you come back. I've kicked the chairs around, and it's wonderful what a pipe will do to make a place seem homey. Gives it atmosphere—isn't it that the writer chaps call it? And I've toned it up with a lot of those "stage favorites" magazines. You know the kind—"Mary Mush as Magdalene," and all that bosomy sort of stuff; warm, but not incendiary. I caught Aunt Maria taking them out with the fire-tongs, but stopped her. It was yesterday. To-day I miss some of the magazines, and I have the conviction that Aunt Gloria has carried them off to her room for a private view.

Speaking of Aunt Gloria—but no, I won't. I'll leave that until you come home, which I advise you to do on receipt of this. It's a waste of time to wait till Monday. My work is done. I'm the boss in this bungalow. What I say goes. All you have to do is bring your nerve along—and the hundred—and step into my shoes. You'll find Aunt Maria easy on the bit after this. And, by the way, she is really a lovable old lady, now she has hopped down from her pedestal. I am growing fond of her.

But Aunt Gloria! Gad, I'd hate to have her for a relative. I'm sorry for you. I wouldn't keep on living with her like this for a million.

Expect you Sunday.

Yours,

JENKS.

Josephus wrote this letter in the library enhaloed with tobacco smoke. He had just finished when Gloria entered. She said meekly:

"I have come to ask if I may have the car this afternoon, Mr. Jenks."

Josephus reflected for a moment.

"I had thought," he observed, "of taking Mary Ann out for an airing. And Fido. They are accustomed to it at home, especially Mary Ann. I have neglected her shockingly while here. She seems to be drooping a bit. Have you noticed it?"

Gloria's face expressed concern.

"Oh, by all means take her. It would be a calamity if you were to be deprived of her companionship—you have so much in common. And I can walk. It is not very far; just a call or two I wish to make."

Josephus drew his brows together. He fancied he made an impressive figure in this pose.

"I wish you to sit down and listen to me," he said severely. "There's a thing going on here—or, I should say, not going on—which requires explanation."

"Oh, but I haven't the time. I must dress, and as I shall walk—"

"Walk nothing! I won't permit it. You knew that before you asked."

"But Mary Ann?" Gloria perched herself on the extreme edge of a chair to make it clear her stay was purely transitory.

"Hang—I'll turn the electric fan on Mary Ann. What I should like to have explained to me, Miss Gloria Brown—speaking of making calls—is the phenomenal absence of young men about these premises. Nights like these they ought to be hanging over the veranda railings two deep. What's the matter?"

Gloria darted a glance at him.

"Under the circumstances, and as you are a little odd—Arthur said so in his telegram—we thought perhaps it might annoy you."

"It would!" Josephus was emphatic in this. "It would annoy me excessively. But I shall be going, Monday—and then—"

He waited, hoping for some indication of regret; but she said:

"I have not forgotten it, Mr. Jenks. I am marking the days off on my calendar."

This was not at all to Mr. Jenks' liking.

"I suppose," he hinted, "you've booked me for a beastly boor, a cad, a—a—"

"Some people can't help it," she consoled him sweetly. "It's their bringing up."

"Oh, I say!" he cried. "That's straight from the griddle. Shall I tell you why I've cut up so?"

Gloria rose.

"Spare yourself, Mr. Jenks. We have tried to make allowances for you. Arthur begged us to. It was in his dispatch, and—"

"The deuce take Arthur!" interjected Mr. Jenks.

"And," concluded Gloria, "I hope we have succeeded. Thank you so much for the car."

She nodded cheerily and would have gone, but Josephus intercepted her.

"Wait!" he pleaded. "I have something more to say."

Gloria stepped aside to pass him, but again he blocked the way.

"You must hear me," he insisted. "I have known you only four days, yet—"

"Beat it! Beat it! It's all down hill!" screeched Mary Ann from the dining-room.

Gloria's lip trembled. Her eyes danced. A little ripple ran through all her body. And then came outright laughter. She tried to go, but Josephus, desperate, caught at her hand and held it.

"Blast that infernal bird!" he growled. "I'll choke her. Gloria"—his tone changed and lingered on the word—"Gloria! Don't laugh. I'm not such a beast as I seem. I'm a philanthropist—really. A good Samaritan in disguise. Gloria! Arthur has aunts in sufficiency.

What he lacks is uncles. Gloria! I—"

"O mush! Mush! Pish! Tush!" squalled Mary Ann.

It was the last straw. The girl reeled with laughter. Then—choking, breathless, her eyes drowned in mirthful tears—she snatched her hand away and ran out of the room.

Josephus carefully re-read his letter to Arthur. He frowned over it awhile, then penned a postscript before sealing it—"No, not for two million!"

He decided to post the letter in Boston; he wished to be sure it would reach Arthur in the early morning mail. Besides, he hankered after distraction; it was a necessity, he told himself. He had heard that if you let your mind dwell persistently on one thing you will get a kink in it—your mind—that won't come out; and he didn't want to get that way. So he went to Boston on the train, leaving word that he would not be home to dinner. He did not, in fact, return until after twelve; he had passed the evening at one of the outlying parks where they were giving summer opera.

As he came up the walk to the house the stillness of the suburban night was broken by a dog's anguished bark. It came from somewhere at the back of the premises and it sounded, he thought, like Billy; but this might be mere imagination. He let himself in with his latchkey. There was no light in the hall, and he groped around for the switch. As he turned it on he heard the dog again. It surely was Billy—and Billy always slept at night on the floor by his bed.

Josephus took counsel with himself. Then he strode over to the dining-room and switched on the light there. Mary Ann was missing from the bow window, cage and all. She was nowhere to be seen.

Josephus, like a hound that has struck the trail, made for the library and looked in. The "stage favorites" had disappeared, the chairs were primly ranged about the walls, and the place smelled of joss sticks. Somebody had been exorcising evil spirits. Josephus smiled and went up to his room. There would be a reckoning in the morning.

He slept peacefully and awoke ready to do battle. He whistled as he drew his bath, and he whistled again—a different tune—when at nine o'clock he rang for breakfast and nobody answered. He waited awhile and rang again and waited awhile. There was no response.

"It's serious," remarked Josephus to himself in the glass. He was dressed with especial care—cream-colored flannels and lavender tie. "Here's where the boss cracks his whip," he added, and strolled down the stairs.

He met Aunt Maria in the hall. She cast a frightened glance at him, and dodged into the parlor.

"It isn't her," mused Josephus ungrammatically. "I'm beginning to smell a mice."

Gloria came in from outdoors. She had on a garden hat and gloves, and carried a basket of late roses. And she was trilling softly a bar of an old-fashioned song—one of those heart-twisters that would make a vaudeville audience these days sit up, only a stupid management doesn't know it.

"Good morning," she greeted Josephus brightly.

"I don't think so." He spoke crabbedly. "I don't think anything is good until I've had my breakfast."

"Breakfast was at eight o'clock. It has been cleared away long ago. But perhaps they can find you a biscuit—or something."

"Yes, but my orders were—"

"Your 'orders,' Mr. Jenks?"

"By the terms of my lease, Miss Gloria Brown—"

"Oh! You must see Arthur about that. I refuse to recognize it."

"But Miss Maria—"

"She has resigned the housekeeping, Mr. Jenks. I have taken over her duties. Her health has broken in the last few days, and she needs a rest."

"Ah!" said Josephus. "I see. Will you be good enough, then, to tell me what you have done with Billy?"

"Billy?"

"Er—I should say Fido!"

"He is chained in the garage. He is more in harmony there with the surroundings. Don't you think so?"

"Ah!" exclaimed Josephus again. "And Mary Ann?"

"On the kitchen porch. It commands a lovely view of the chicken yard; and the Rhode Island Reds enjoy her sparkles of wit."

"Help! Help! Poor Polly!" came a distant lament.

Gloria suddenly bent her head over her roses. Josephus approached her more nearly. He was trying to keep himself in hand. She was the most adorable creature he had ever looked upon, and he wanted her—as a man lost in darkness wants the light.

"My magazines?" he said sternly. "Where are they?"

Gloria tilted her head to one side, ever so slightly, yet enough to let him catch a glimpse of a mischievous eye.

"They have been removed for censorship," she told him.

Josephus gave up trying. He let himself go—and came a cropper.

"You witch!" he breathed in her ear. "You beauty! You darling!"

She drew back from him, startled now, and afraid.

"How dare you!" she gasped, yet

her tone was singularly without rancor.

She drew still farther away, and then, all at once, she turned and fled from him up the stair, scattering her roses as she ran.

Josephus picked up one of them and put it in his coat. He sighed. Young fool that he was he read the signs awry. He did not know she was peeping at him over the banisters, exultant, wistful, worshipping. He only knew she had spurned him, had run from him as from a pestilent thing. Breakfast—he scorned the thought! He pulled out his pipe, seeking consolation, but had scarcely lighted it when a voice floated down to him from above—

"Verboten!"

Harold's face sprang up on Josephus's mental horizon like a leering mask, and he grimaced at it. Yet he called back submissively:

"Oh, all right! I'm whipped."

He tossed the pipe out on the lawn, lingered irresolutely a hopeful second and, nothing more coming from above, went off disconsolately to visit Billy. He unchained the fawning beast and took a walk with him through the town. He wanted to think this thing out. It had become a very personal matter with him. He had cut a sorry figure in Gloria's sight up to now; he must do something to redeem himself—something, by Jove, heroic! And then the idea came to him. He retraced his steps to the house and sought out Silas in the garage. When he left him Silas, grinning widely, held in one hand Josephus's latchkey and in the other a yellow-back good as any double eagle in the land.

IV

Luncheon was at two that day, and Josephus was there on the dot. Likewise at dinner when the clock

struck seven. Aunt Maria, fidgety as a flea on a feist, gazed in awe at Gloria who had wrought this marvelous change. Josephus had not mentioned Mary Ann, and he had returned the dog to the barn. She began to be afraid the young man was going to have a "spell" of some kind. But Gloria sat at the head of the feast demurely insensible to these miracles.

Josephus went to his room early. He said he had letters to write, and this is the way he set about it: First he carefully rumbled up his bed; then he laid a bathrobe across it and beside it a heavy walking stick; next he donned his pajamas and slippers; and, finally, he sat down and tried to read. But for all he could sense the printed page it might have been Greek to him, a language he had contemned at college as a painful anachronism.

An hour passed. It was ten o'clock. He heard Aunt Maria and Gloria come up. Another hour passed. Josephus got up, cut off his light, and opened his door—gently. The house was dark. There was no thread of light showing at the base of the doors opposite his. Aunt Maria and Gloria were asleep. He listened intently for a time, then, with a satisfied nod to himself, drew back into his room. He slipped into his robe, tousled his hair, and picked up his stick. Thus armed and accoutered he waited tensely.

A noise came from downstairs. It was as if someone had stumbled over a piece of furniture, and it was distinct and startling. Josephus waited yet a moment and stepped out on the landing. Across the hall two dim white figures stood in their respective doors. Josephus slid over to them swiftly and silently.

"S-s-sh! Keep perfectly still," he enjoined. "Somebody is in the dining-room—after the plate, of

course. I'll attend to him. Whatever you do don't turn on the lights. He can see to shoot then."

"Oh! Don't go down. He-he may kill you. Don't!" It was Gloria, pleading with him in a choking whisper.

"Josephus! I-I forbid it!" gurgled Aunt Maria.

"Josephus!" entreated Gloria.

But he sternly motioned them to be quiet and slipped off down the stairs. "Josephus!" They had never called him that until now, and he could have grappled with a raging lion for less.

Upstairs Gloria and Aunt Maria listened quiveringly, clasped in each other's arms. Presently they heard a clatter in the dining-room, the sound of blows and fierce words, the upsetting of chairs, and finally a dreadful groan and the crash of glass.

Gloria shrieked and Aunt Maria whimpered. Then the lights flashed up from below. They peered down over the railing in trembling terror. Josephus was staggering like a drunken man, a fragment of his stick clutched in his hand. A horrible red smear ran slantwise athwart his forehead.

"He got away," he panted. "Through the window. But he'll remember me. I gave him one." He sank limply into a chair.

"Oh, but you are hurt!" cried out Gloria. "Wait!"

She rushed into her room and drew on a kimono; then, barefooted, her white arms gleaming like rounded marble, she sped down the stair. As she came, Josephus who, it appeared, carried handkerchiefs in his bathrobe, wiped away the gruesome stain upon his valiant front—wiped it thoroughly. Aunt Maria, who had also retired hastily, for purposes complementary to her slim attire, tottered down in Gloria's wake,

"Where is it? Where are you hurt?" demanded the girl.

"My head," groaned Josephus.

"The doctor! We must call him!" clamored Aunt Maria.

"No!" Josephus vetoed this with sudden vigor. It was followed by an equally sudden relapse. He moaned.

"But the blood! You—you are wounded!" quavered Gloria.

"A scratch on the scalp. It is nothing," asserted Josephus. "I'm a bit dazed, that's all. Dizzy. If I could get up to bed—" He made a weak effort to rise.

"Yes, yes," agreed Gloria eagerly. "We will manage it. Lean on me. Auntie, take his arm."

They convoyed him up to his room in this wise, and Josephus leaned on Gloria, his heart pounding at his ribs as if it had run amuck in his inner works. They got him into bed, and then Josephus called for the hot water bag. It would ease his head, he thought. Aunt Maria went for it, as he had hoped. She refused to rouse the maids. They slept on the upmost floor and, evidently, were holding a competition with the Seven Sleepers.

"Gloria," murmured Josephus when they were alone. "Glo-ri-a!"

He reached out languidly for her hand. Somehow it was not hard to find, and he drew it up to his lips.

"Glo-ri-a," he articulated feebly. "Billy—Mary Ann—my pipe."

"I have it—the pipe," confessed Gloria falteringly. "I went out and got it after you left. And Fido—Billy, I mean—and Mary Ann—in the morning—you will find it all as it was. I—I was only trying you."

"Oh!" said Josephus.

"And from the first," continued Gloria, shriving herself in full, "from the first I suspected that you—that Arthur—his telegram—oh, you understand—Josephus!"

"Um," grunted Josephus, and took a minute to digest this. Then, praying that the water bag would blow up, or Aunt Maria would—anything to keep her—he whispered: "May I say it now? You witch! You darling! You dearest of all girls! Oh, how I love you!"

He drew her toward him. She did not resist. Her breath, sweet as flower incense, fluttered on his cheek and her hand, in his, trembled like a lily wooed by summer airs. In that moment Josephus felt mightily ashamed of himself yet wickedly unrepentant. The end justified the means.

Mr. Arthur Brown arrived in the morning. Josephus, his head picturesquely swathed in an entirely superfluous towel, reposed in the library smoking his pipe amid a litter of newspapers and other printed trash. Gloria sat beside him, tenderly solicitous. Billy was stretched out in the hall, where it was cool, at the library door. Mary Ann, in the dining-room, made observations now and again peculiarly her own.

Aunt Maria ushered Arthur in upon this scene. She had spied him coming up to the house, and kept him on the porch until she had emptied the reservoirs of her soul to him. She was smiling, happy, and absurdly tolerant in all things. Josephus patronized his friend.

"Come in, my boy, come right in. Light up. Make yourself at home. Liberty Hall, you know. Anything goes."

Gloria ran to meet Arthur and kissed him. He held her off and looked at her. She met his gaze sweetly proud, but with color mounting fast and furious. He turned to Josephus.

"I have a mind," he said, "to read aloud that letter you sent me. I rather think, confound you, it would

take you down a peg. What about that sham fight last night?"

"Sham?" Gloria and Aunt Maria echoed the word indignantly.

"You should have seen him!" added Gloria hotly.

"I'd have liked to," said Arthur.

"Aunt Maria, hand me the tobacco will you please?" requested Josephus lazily. "Gloria, come away from that young person. He is dis-

respectful to his uncle. I shall have to reason with him, I perceive."

Arthur threw up his hands. He sputtered like a burning fuse, and then exploded.

"By George, you win!" He keeled over into a chair and howled until Billy got up and joined in with him.

"My stars! My stars!" screamed Mary Ann from her perch in the dining-room.



DOLLAR DYNAMICS

BY RICHARDSON WRIGHT

LEST this title seem fancifully alliterative, I would tell you two incidents, the one English, the other American: the one because it represented the *force* of money, the other the *moving power* of money; and motion and force, if you recall, are the elements of that phase of science known as dynamics.

She was a marchioness person who wore her hair *à la Danois*, reminiscent of that day—long since passed—when Edward had taken his bride from among the princesses of the North. Her husband momentarily expecting birthday honors, she graced an elaborate establishment and entertained lavishly in the heart of London's most fashionable district. A bit faded was this grande dame, but still very much of the world, which developed as the tea proceeded. With characteristic skill she directed the stream of conversation hither and thither to suit her

moods. It turned upon Americans, and unapparently unaware that I was an American, she delivered herself of a not too kindly criticism of what she was pleased to call our vulgar wealth, our insatiable pursuit of it. Then from Americans the conversation drifted on to stocks and bonds and the general financial outlook in London, at which point she re-entered the conversation with renewed avidity. The situation was utterly deplorable. She threw up helpless hands. Consols were hopelessly inactive and—

"But where do you invest, then?" I interrupted.

"In America, of course, absolutely the only way to make a sou . . . Did you say you took lemon, my dear? . . . Yes, America is the only—" And the rest was lost in the return of another cup.

Although that incident happened four years ago, its vividness remains with me, impressing me now as it

impressed me then, with the force of dollars—American dollars, despised, vulgar, ostentatious American dollars.

The other was of dollars in motion.

Visualize a small office—high up in a building—with views of row on row of other tall buildings. Inside, the room was bare save for a wardrobe, two chairs and a desk. At the desk a clean-shaven man with a tense face, weary-looking but indomitable. As I entered a faint smile flickered over his countenance, and he waved me to a chair. A telephone rang; he swung around to answer it. Washington was calling. Yes, yes, the ship would clear this afternoon. No, they couldn't put aboard seven carloads—they'd have to go by the next boat. Then he hung up the receiver and turned around. "Think of it—seven carloads that we didn't have room for! Seven!"

It was the office of a secretary of the Red Cross. Over his desk passed records of the stores that were being sent to the sufferers on the other side. The problem of food had long since passed beyond his control, it was only medical supplies now—ether and lint, gauze, alcohol and surgical instruments. There were the lists before him in a big portfolio. Calmly, unperturbed he sat, as sits an engineer before a switchboard, turning on the power that will lighten this dark spot of town and that. He knew neither friend nor foe; he only knew that on the other side thousands were suffering, and with all speed was he hastening help thither, lest when the light should come the darkness would comprehend it not.

And the seven carloads? They were the seven cars full of gifts from American children to the homeless, orphaned, foreign children,

seven cars left over that the *Jason* could not hold.

He showed me, too, a list of private donations—here a rich man was supporting a hospital, there a woman supplied money for a huge consignment of anæsthetics, a tobacconist sent 75,000 cigarettes.

And he told me things, did this wearied man, that should I tell you here would make you weep. But tears are aside from my point; moved though I was, before me rose a greater vision: The titan image of America—America, gold-sodden — materialistic America — pouring out her despised dollars—rich men contributing a king's ransom, working girls giving a week's pocket money, little children sacrificing their pennies. On, on, untiring and inexhaustible, came the force. It was money in action. It was an accursed thing purged of its pride, going like a strong man to battle.

I have repeated these two incidents not alone because they explain my terms, but because they furnish a contrast on which can be constructed ideas that to me, at least, are of vital importance in this hour. The time must come when money is purged of pride, when the possession and the expenditure of money take on a different aspect from that which they now wear. Nor will we arrive at this understanding until we have comprehended the real symbolism of the dollar bill.

Whether it is in our pocket or the pocket of the other man, a dollar bill is a cell in which is stored up potential energy that may be expended for good or evil. It is concentrated power. The man who possesses one dollar presents one contact point through which this power can flow; he who has a thousand presents a thousand contact points. According to the measure in which this energy

is sent out for good is money purged of pride; according to the measure in which it is expended for ill does it remain an accursed thing. Upon Americans, whom my friend in Mayfair would despise for pursuing and possessing money, must devolve, it would seem, the task of proving that more good than evil can be done in the world by a dollar.

Consider two facts of history:

In 1904, the United States returned to China its share of the Boxer Indemnity on the provision that she devote it to educational purposes. Thirty years previous, France paid Germany an indemnity which she forthwith put away in the fortress of Spandau, added to yearly, and with which she is now conducting the most bloody war in history. Both are examples of money ultimately in motion, the one expended for good, the other for evil, I sincerely believe. And the results? Education has gone ahead by leaps and bounds in China and there are hundreds of Chinese students in this country being supported at the expense of their government. On the other hand, there is that tired-eyed man at the Red Cross Headquarters vainly striving to stem the tide of money spent for ill with money spent for good.

Here is the contrast reduced to dollars and cents. Materialistic? Avowedly so. But is not the American way an ideal materialism? Is it not taking that wornout tradition of materialism and showing that it is not always evil? According to the old interpretation, about the only people who were consigned eternally to "flames undying" were the materialists; according to recent practice, the supposedly most materialistic nation on the globe is proving itself worthy to be accounted among the faithful servants in the household of civilization.

Sincerely I believe that materialism can be made ideal, both for a nation and for the individual. And the time is not far off when those people who have scoffed at us for our vulgar wealth and insatiable pursuit of it will recognize that any other way is ultimately destructive.

II

In one of Tchekhoff's stories occurs this passage: "A creed which teaches indifference to wealth, indifference to the conveniences of life and contempt for suffering is quite incomprehensible to the great majority who never knew either wealth or the conveniences of life and to whom contempt for suffering would mean contempt for their own lives, which are made up of feelings of hunger, cold, loss, insult, and a Hamlet-like terror of death. All life lies in these feelings, and life may be hated or wearied of, but never despised."

View it from whatever angle we will, war is never anything but a studied indifference to the conveniences of life and a contempt for suffering. It values wealth only in terms of its destructive power. We know that patriotism no longer causes a war, but that bankers permit it. When bankers arrive at the point where they can despise capital to the extent of seeing it ruthlessly destroyed, then are flung to the winds all those laws of humanity which have been struggling to a point of perfection in "the slow pageant of the race." Perhaps it is well. Perhaps these present struggles are but the growing pains of a new civilization that will arise when the great fact of the past year has become impressed upon the world's consciousness.

We shall see the map made over, we are told. We shall also see changed the contour of men's souls.

In the place of old ideals that have corrupted the world will arise others, nobler, more sublime, ideals more real than symbols and more concrete than dreams. And for these and by these will men be more willing to live, to labor, to suffer and to die.

The first and greatest, I believe, will be that of the nobility of possessing money.

This may sound trite. It may also sound like rank materialism and the selfsame sort of pride which has brought about the present conflict. The psychology of possession, however, clears away any such misunderstanding.

If you yourself have never passed through the experience, there is eminent proof and testimony to the fact that the possession of one dollar bill will make a man feel respectable. It tends to remake personality. It gives him a moment of great existence, a moment when he no longer feels shackled by the inability to do and be things. It lifts him to a height of spiritual freedom.

And it is a spiritual experience, this sensation of possessing money, for it is part of all possession, be it material or spiritual. Once a man feels it, he is emboldened by an unaccountable urge; ambition and desire awaken within him. Having power he can reach out to other power and that other power, in turn, reaches out to him. Between them is mutual attraction, just as the lover finds himself drawn to his beloved and the mystic gathered to the bosom of his God.

Hitherto we have been told that labor—physical labor, “something to do”—will redeem men. To this Henry Ford has added a pertinent corollary—that labor leading to possession will make new men even out of broken ex-convicts. He has

proved it by men in his employ into whom was thrilled the potential energy of the dollar. It spelt redemption to them because it spelt freedom and a sense of aliveness, which are the first steps to growth.

The man who, after many years of staggering under debt, has finally shaken it off, the man who has “just rounded the corner”, know well the quickening joy of this sensation. Before that, life was always a step into the dark with fears of hunger, loss, cold, insult and the terror of death eternally hovering about on the edge of consciousness.

III

The uneven distribution of money has been termed a cancer upon civilization, a statement that few will deny. It is sapping our vitality and spelling slow destruction. Were Francis of Assisi to return and walk our streets, doubtless he would preach the loveliness of Lady Poverty with even more zeal than ever he did in those golden days up and down the lanes of Umbria. Perchance, being a physician of souls, however, he would see our spiritual sickness in a new light. For in itself a cancer is of the same substance as the rest of the flesh—the same sort of cells with the same sort of cell growth. Its evil lies in the fact that its energy is concentrated at one point. Eventually scientists—“those eyeless worms who loosen the soil for the crops of God”—will find a way to disperse this concentrated cell growth, and the terror will no longer appall us.

In the same way must some scheme be worked out whereby this concentration of dollars ceases and the power be more evenly disbursed. The nihilist would destroy the possessor—a course as futile as is the present operation; some would have government ownership under the

people so that the energy of money can be distributed for the greatest good of the greatest number. But whatever the course, we have first to appreciate the basic facts of dollar dynamics. We have to measure its power, its infinite possibilities. We have to clear away prejudice and misconception. Too long have we had it preached to us that the owning of money is not conducive to spiritual development and the desire for it the root of all evil. Century after century have we stumbled along in this belief, repeating platitudes that in our lives we deny, repeating them blindly because the generations before us were taught to say them albeit they believed them not. It is high time that we learn how vain is the belief that man can convert to permanent evil that which in itself is good. We may possess money, but we are afraid of it. It would seem to be a favorite medium of a proverbial Devil whereas, in reality, it is to mankind what the forces of nature were to the gods of old—power.

Do you recall that deathless passage in Francis Thompson's essay on Shelley in which he accuses the Church of having disdained the good in poetry? With singular fitness it would seem to apply to the good we have disdained in the power of money:

"If you have no room for her beneath the wings of the Holy One, there is place for her beneath the webs of the Evil One; whom you discard, he embraces; whom you cast down from an honorable seat, he will advance to a haughty throne; the brows you dislaurel of a just respect, he will bind with baleful splendors; the stone which you builders reject, he will make his head of the corner . . ."

IV

We are all unconscious symbolists, and our lives are but shadows of diviner things slowly but inevitably being worked out to perfection. The master artist who paints the rainbow in the sky, the master voice that calls across the deep, the master mason who has laid the foundation of the hills and reared the mighty temples of the peaks—He, He also guides the hand that makes the perfect machine. His voice sings to us in the hum of commerce, His laws rear skyward our gigantic temples of barter.

Look about your cities, you Americans. Behold the symbolism written there in the row on row of roofs. "Cathedrals of commerce" all, towering above the church spires as once the churches towered above the dwellings of men. Nor is it that we Americans disdain these churches, but that in us is being worked out a scheme for newer ideals, lest the old corrupt the world.

The cry comes from Macedonia—and our ships speed help thither. A nation in darkness calls for light, and from the great powerhouse of money the light is given. The man who has a dollar possesses a degree of this same power, and according to the measure of his possessions will he be held to account. But never think that we are drunken with gold lust, for as that dollar bill is a symbol, so are these temples of commerce symbols. The church spire was called once "a finger pointing to Heaven." Yet I can never see a skyscraper without thinking of Moses on the mountain—seeing in their arrogance a humility, and in their strength a weakness. They are ever to me as arms—tireless arms stretching up—up—

EDITORIAL CONFIDENCES

A COMPLETE novel will appear in the June issue of LIPPINCOTT'S and every month thereafter. Nearly ninety per cent of our readers prefer the novelette complete in each issue to the serial story running for several months. The majority vote wins.

Our inquiry card brought us in very close touch with our readers and their preferences, so that LIPPINCOTT'S will become more than ever the reflection of your personal tastes in literature.

The answers we have received in reply to our inquiries are most interesting. They show us that we have many loyal friends among our readers, even among those who have missed the regular appearance of the novelette. One of these latter writes: "The new numbers of LIPPINCOTT'S are excellent. If the standard is maintained, you need not fear for circulation." Another likes a good serial but prefers a short novel, adding that she likes everything that LIPPINCOTT'S publishes. There are many who call LIPPINCOTT'S their favorite magazine, which we modestly take to be a striking evidence of good taste. One subscriber writes, "I have no preference," and adds whimsically, "my advice would be to conduct my magazine in the manner most profitable, as it does not always pay to listen to complaints." A prominent Philadelphia physician says, "Your magazine was never better than at present."

Knowing, however, that most of our readers prefer the novelette, we are glad to accede to their wishes. The reinstatement will begin with "The Happy Man," by Ralph Henry Barbour, who is well-known as a writer of fiction of the better class.

This will be followed with others by writers of equal fame—stories that will live up to the standard set for LIPPINCOTT fiction.

The personality of authors, we find, enlists public attention quite as much as that of other creative workers, such as actors and artists. We have had a number of inquiries about Achmed Abdullah, some of whose excellent stories we have lately had the privilege of publishing. His writing speaks for itself, but the following details lend an additional interest to his work:

Sheykh Achmed Abdullah is a nephew of the Emir of Afghanistan. He was sent from that mysterious country to be educated at Oxford, but the restraint he felt under the conservatism of the English university was irksome, and he left without taking his degree. Later he studied at the Sorbonne in Paris, and at a university in Germany. Returning to the East, he was given a commission in the English army in India. He saw service also with the United States army in the Philippines.

Abdullah has traveled widely and knows many of the most inaccessible portions of the world. He speaks a dozen or more languages, and much of his writing has appeared in English, French, and German magazines. Further stories from his pen will appear in LIPPINCOTT'S.

We have been very much pleased at the response to our invitation for opinions as to the new LIPPINCOTT'S, and we take this occasion to thank those who have been good enough to write us. The magazine has profited by your criticism and advice.

—THE EDITOR.



ANOLA

ADORA — Delicious sugar wafers with confectionery filling. Appropriate for all occasions.

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**NATIONAL
BISCUIT
COMPANY**



THE TIME HE WON

"Mamma," said Harold, "I made a bet with George."

"But, my son," said the mother sternly, "you know mamma does not allow you to bet and it will serve you right if you lose."

"Well, I bet my new rubbers against five marbles that you would give me a dime; you don't want me to lose my rubbers, do you?"

AWKWARD MOMENT

It so happened that an absent-minded minister arrived late one winter's afternoon in an Eastern town, intent upon visiting an old colleague whom he had not seen for some years. Upon arriving at the house, he was immediately shown to his room, where he prepared himself for dinner before meeting his host's family.

When he was groomed to his satisfaction, he descended to the drawing-room below. He found the door open, but the lights were not yet lighted. A bright, cheerful fire was burning in the grate, and somebody's head was just visible over the top of a luxurious arm chair in front of it. The minister is a trifle near-sighted, but he could discern that there was somebody in the chair. Tiptoeing softly up behind it, he patted the occupant softly on the head, saying:

"Hello! Warming up your shins just as you used to?"

Then his old chum's wife, whom

he had never met, rose out of the chair to greet him.

DOWN AT HEEL

"Oh, see!" said Mrs. Gray, "that woman walking ahead of us has left her placket open. I must tell her of it."

"Don't," advised Mrs. Brown. "She's not the kind to be grateful. Look how her shoes are worn down at the heel!"

"Yes—but it's kinder," Mrs. Gray insisted, and she stepped forward with nervous conscientiousness.

"Excuse me, madam," she faltered, as the woman turned upon her a suspicious, angry glance, "but—did you know your—your shoes are worn down at the heel?"

POST-MORTEM

The old housekeeper was doing the last honors of her dead master's house.

"But, Mrs. O'Reilly," asked a relative, "what did Cousin John die of?"

"Faith, sor, I don't rightly know, not to say—but last week thim doctors, they hild a consolation an' found it was somethin' eternal."

POINTED, ANYWAY

Smithson: "Well, can you beat it? Every last thing that stupid, old Colonel Jones predicted about the war has come true."

Plunkett: "That so? I always thought he was a bore, but I never guessed he was an auger."

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WALNUTS AND WINE

HIS ONLY ESCAPE

A certain French journalist was one day disagreeably intruded upon by a creditor, who announced his intention of not departing until his bill was paid.

The creditor planted himself upon a chair, and the journalist beheld him, with consternation, draw a package of sandwiches from his pocket, as though to fortify himself against a long stay.

Several hours glided by. The journalist finished his article. The creditor showed no signs of leaving. Suddenly the journalist arose, and with bits of newspaper began carefully filling all the apertures through which air could come into the room. He then made preparations for lighting a charcoal fire. Just before applying the match, he wrote something on a large sheet of paper and pasted it upon the wall. The paper was worded, "Take notice that we die of our own will."

"What are you doing?" cried the creditor uneasily.

"Well, my friend," replied the journalist, tranquilly, "your society would render life perfectly intolerable, so we are going to commit suicide together."

It is needless to say the creditor left.

HE KNEW THE ANSWER

His name was Tommy, and he came home from school looking so down in the mouth that mother asked him severely what was the matter.

Out of his little trousers pocket he fished a note from the teacher, which said, "Tommy has been a very naughty boy. Please have a serious talk with him."

"What did you do?" asked mother.

"Nothing," sobbed Tommy. "She asked a question, and I was the only one who could answer it."

"H'm," murmured mother. "What was the question?"

"Who put the dead mouse in her desk-drawer?" answered Tommy.

A COMPROMISE

Congressman Henry D. Clayton, of Alabama, tells of a ducky in Mobile who married a dusky belle of Louisville, Kentucky.

A couple of years after their union, the wife was taken seriously ill and became convinced that she was going to die.

"Sam," she observed mournfully, "Ah's been a good an' faithful wife to yo', an' now Ah'm dyin'. Ah wants yo' to promise to do me a favor."

Sam, endeavoring to choke down a sob, asked:

"What yo' want, Dora?"

"Sam, Ah wants yo' to berry me wif mah own folks in Louisville."

The husband, though seriously grieved, ceased his lamentations long enough to reply:

"Dora, Ah can't do it. It's too 'sensitive to take yo' to Louisville."

"Sam," the wife solemnly rejoined, "ef yo' doan take me to Louisville Ah's goin' to haunt yo'! My sperit 'll come back to yo', Sam. It shore will!"

"Well, ef it comes to dat," Sam replied meditatively, "Ah suppose Ah 'll have to humor yo'; but, Dora, I's goin' to try yo' in Mobile fust."

BEING NEIGHBORLY

Agent: "I came to deliver your book on 'How to Play the Piano.'"

Lady: "But I didn't order any."

Agent: "Haven't you a next-door neighbor named Brown?"

Lady: "Why, yes. Is it for her?"

Agent: "No, she ordered it for you."

ENCOURAGED

He had plastered his touched-up

Power of Will

Why is this man master? He is unarmed. The lion has the physical strength to tear him to shreds—his mouth is watering, yet he dares not. He is cowed—cowed by the man's POWER OF WILL



Partial List of Contents

The Law of Great Thinking. The Four Factors on which it depends.
How to develop analytical power.
How to think "all around" any subject.
How to throw the mind into deliberate, controlled, productive thinking.
Detailed directions for Perfect Mind Concentration.
How to acquire the power of Consecutive Thinking, Reasoning, Analysis.
How to acquire the skill of Creative Writing.
How to guard against errors in Thought.
How to drive from the mind all unwelcome thoughts.
How to follow lines of thought with keen, concentrated Power.
How to develop Reasoning Power.
How to handle the mind in Creative Thinking.
The secret of Building Mind Power.
How the Will is made to act.
How to test your Will.
How a Strong Will is Master of Body.
What creates Human Power.
The Six Principles of Will training.
Definite Methods for developing Will.
The NINETY-NINE METHODS for using Will-Power in the Conduct of Life.
Seven Principles of drill in Mental, Physical, Personal power.
FIFTY-ONE MAXIMS for Applied Power of Perception, Memory, Imagination, Self-Analysis, Control.
How to develop a strong, keen gaze.
How to concentrate the eye upon what is before you—object, person, printed page, work.
How to become aware of Nerve Action.
How to keep the body well-poised.
How to open the Mind and Body for reception of incoming power.
How to exercise the nerves.
How to throw off Worry.
How to overcome the tyranny of the Nervous System.
How to secure steady nerves.
How to maintain the Central Factors of Body health.
A complete list of contents would nearly fill this page.

Anyone Can Have An Indomitable Will

It has long been known that the will can be trained into wonderful power—like memory, or like any one of the senses—by intelligent exercise and use. The trouble with almost every one is that they do not use their wills. They carry out other people's wills, or drift along with circumstance.

If you held your arm in a sling for two years, the muscles would become powerless to lift a feather. That is exactly what happens, in most people, to the faculty we call "will-power." Because we never use the Will, we finally become unable to use it.

We degenerate into beings little more than slaves—unhappy, discontented, envious, hoping blindly that "some day"—without any effort—we will attain what we most want in life.

"Power of Will," by Frank Channing Haddock, Ph. D., M. S., is a scientific course in Will-Training which has helped over 50,000 people. This great work provides a thorough course in Will-Training, consisting of 28 lessons. It reveals the secrets as to how great men train their wills into wonderful power.

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WALNUTS AND WINE

hair over his bald spot, assuming the sort of smile that his girl friends had called "childish" when he was in college. Then he called on the young lady.

"My object in calling on you this evening, Gertrude"—he began, and then he coughed and added in a trembling voice: "I may call you Gertrude, may I not?"

"Sure, you may," answered the young girl. "I allow all of Papa's elderly friends to call me Gertrude. The oldest of them even calls me Gert. You may say Gert, if you wish. What was it that you wanted to talk about?"

He coughed again, and then talked about how much warmer it was in the summer of 1872.

TWO PLAIN

He: "I wish you'd drop the 'Mister' and call me plain George."

She: "Oh, but it would be unkind to twit you on your personal appearance that way."—*Boston Transcript*.

SHE HAD TO MISS IT

In the southern part of Arkansas, where the natives take things easy, a man and his wife were sitting on their porch, when a funeral procession passed the house. The man was comfortably seated in a chair that was tilted back against the house, and was whittling a piece of wood. As the procession passed, he said:

"I reckon ol' man Williams has got about the biggest funeral that's ever been held round hyer, Caroline."

"A purty good-sized one, is it, Bud?" queried the wife, making no effort to move.

"Certainly is," Bud answered.

"I surely would like to see it," said the woman. "What a pity I ain't facin' that way!"—*Youth's Companion*.

A PROBLEM SOLVED

"Anyhow, there's one advantage in

having a wooden leg," said the veteran.

"What's that?" asked his friend.

"You can hold your socks up with thumb-tacks."—*Columbia Jester*.

FORETHOUGHT

"I wish Ingomar to think only of me."

"I would not distract his thoughts too much from business, my dear," counseled her mother. "Remember, you will need a great many expensive things."—*Louisville Courier-Journal*.

CALLING AGAIN

"You are the manager here, eh? Well, years ago I dined here, and being unable to pay my bill you kicked me out."

"Very sorry, sare; but business, you know—er—"

"Oh, that's all right, old chap—but might I trouble you again?"—*Tatler*.

THE IMMORTAL ROBINSON

There has been some question as to whether it was Columbus or Leif, the Scandinavian, who discovered America, but it remained for an old ducky in Washington to put forth an as yet unheard-of rival to the great Genoese.

It appears that this ducky's wife was greatly stirred up by the women's rights question. One evening the old lady was condemning the men in very strong terms, and expressing herself in favor of the franchise for women. The old man got tired of it. He looked at her over his spectacles and delivered himself as follows:

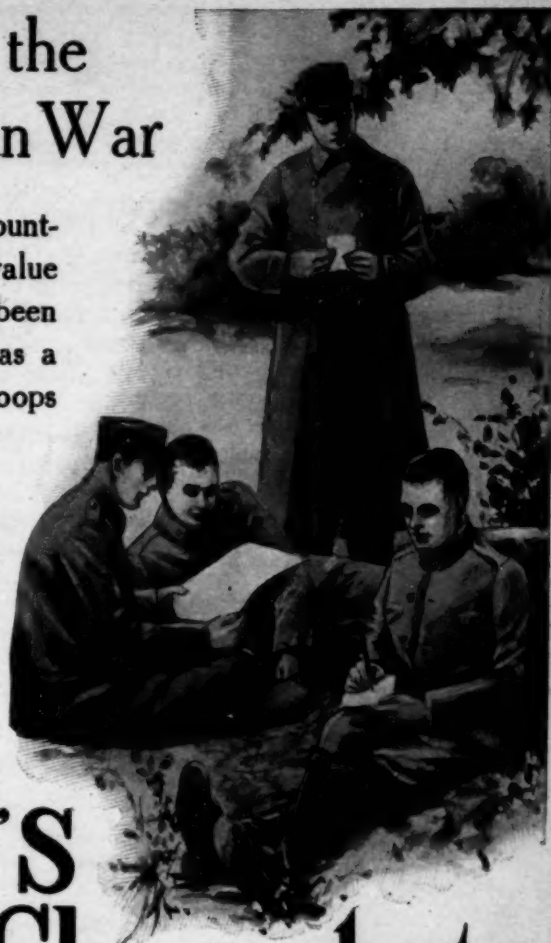
"Look heah, you Clara Collins! De men has made out to govern dis country ever since Robinson Crusoe discovered it, an' I reckon they will for a long while yit; so you jest keep still."

AN AUDACIOUS AGENT

There has been operating in Sy-

A Lesson of the Great European War

Once more, among almost countless times, has the high food value of chocolate and cocoa been demonstrated, both serving as a part of the rations of the troops in active service. One of the best known writers on dietetics, says: "Chocolate is a perfect food, as wholesome as it is delicious, a beneficent restorer of exhausted power."



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WALNUTS AND WINE

racuse a book-agent who is certainly a man of infinite resource. One morning a citizen of that town was on his way to the railway station when he was accosted by the afore-said agent, with the result that a five-dollar sale was consummated.

"It will be something to read on the train," said the Syracusan, as he gave his name and accepted a receipt.

The book proved, however, to be a dull one, and the Syracuse man left it at his office; but on his return home that evening there was another copy on the library table, and his wife explained that the agent had left it there, and had collected five dollars, saying that such were her husband's orders.

The Syracuse man was enraged. "If I had that agent here," he howled, "I'd kill him!"

"Why, there he goes now!" exclaimed the wife in turn, pointing out of the window. "See—he is hurrying down the street toward the station."

The husband dashed upstairs for his coat and shoes; but while he was dressing a neighbor came along in a motorcar. He hailed the neighbor from the window.

"Hurry to the station and hold up that man for me!" he yelled. "That fellow with the books! Understand?"

"I get you!" yelled back the obliging neighbor; and he put on full speed and soon reached the agent.

"The man up on the hill wants you," he said.

"Oh, yes," said the agent, as the train steamed in. "That's Mr. Jones. He wants one of my books. Do you mind taking it for him? It's five dollars please."

Then the train departed, with the agent on it, and the motorist sped back to Jones again.

"Here's your book," he said, hold-

ing it aloft, "and you owe me five dollars."

BREAKING THE NEWS

"Sis won't be able to see you to-night, Mr. Jones," said her little brother. "She's had a tur'ble accident."

"Is that so? What happened?"

"All her hair got burned up."

"Good heavens! Was she burned?"

"Naw, she wasn't there. She don't know about it yet."

HIS SPECIALTY

During the last Presidential campaign a Democratic speaker in northern New York was discussing the effect of the tariff on the price of various commodities.

"What about hay?" shouted a noisy opponent.

"I am discussing human food now," retorted the speaker; "but I'll come to your specialty in a moment."

CAUSE FOR COMPLAINT

Sandy McTavish was sitting weeping at his fireside.

"Eh, Sandy, mon," said a neighbor, peeping in at the open window, attracted by the signs of woe, "what's ailin' ye?"

"Oh, dear! Oh, dear!" sobbed Sandy. "Donald McPherson's wife is deid."

"Aweel," said the neighbor, "what o' that? She's nae relation o' yours, ye ken."

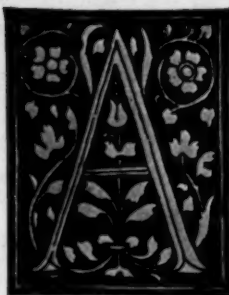
"I ken thot," wailed Sandy, "I ken she's no; but it juist seems as if everybody's gettin' a change but me."

COMPLETELY RECONCILED

"Wombat used to be a great outdoor man and all-around sport. Is he reconciled to married life?"

"I think so. I called on him recently and found him sifting ashes with an old tennis racket."—*Kansas City Journal*.

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WALNUTS AND WINE

FAR CRY

"Mister, will you give me some change? I'm stranded here, and I want to call up my home."

"Certainly, my good man. Where do you live?"

"San Francisco."—*Baltimore American*.

OLD FRIENDS

While visiting the Berlin zoological gardens, little Gretchen saw a great white bird standing on one leg in a cage. She threw in a piece of candy; the bird gobbled it up eagerly, and thrust its head through the wire for more.

Presently Gretchen's mother came along. "O mother, see here! What kind of a bird is this?"

The mother pointed to the sign on the cage, which read, "The Stork."

"The stork!" cried the little girl, enthusiastically. "O mama, do you know, he actually recognized me!"—*Lustige Blätter*.

REASON ENOUGH

Ichabod: Father, why do the Chinese believe in ancestor worship?

Father: I presume, my son, because they have no family photo-graph albums.—*Puck*.

WORSE YET

The worried countenance of the bridegroom disturbed the best man. Tiptoeing up the aisle, he whispered:

"What's the matter, Jock? Hae ye lost the ring?"

"No," blurted out the unhappy Jock, "the ring's safe eno'. But, mon, I've lost ma enthusiasm."—*Youth's Companion*.

ALL MADE CLEAR

A woman missionary in China was taking tea with a mandarin's eight wives. The Chinese ladies examined her clothing, her hair, her

teeth, and so on, but her feet especially amazed them.

"Why," cried one, "you can walk and run as well as a man."

"Yes, to be sure," said the missionary.

"Can you ride a horse and swim, too?"

"Yes."

"Then you must be as strong as a man."

"I am."

"And you wouldn't let a man beat you—not even if he was your husband—would you?"

"Indeed, I wouldn't," the missionary said.

The mandarin's eight wives looked at one another, nodding their heads. Then the oldest said, softly:

"Now I understand why the foreign devil never has more than one wife. He is afraid."—*Southern Women's Magazine*.

WASTED

Husband: You charge me with reckless extravagance. When did I ever make a useless purchase?

Wife: Why, there's that fire-extinguisher you bought a year ago; we've never used it once.—*Boston Transcript*.

UP-TO-DATE

Kind Stranger: How old is your baby brother, little girl?

Little Girl: He's a this year's model.—*Chicago News*.

NOT BUILT THAT WAY

The Officer: Can't you get down flatter than that?

The Fat Private: No, sir, unless I stand up, sir.—*London Sketch*.

ASTUTE CHILD!

"Sadie, what is a gentleman?"

"Please, ma'am," answered the well-bred child, "a gentleman's a man you don't know very well."—*Pittsburgh Chronicle-Telegraph*.

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WALNUTS AND WINE

ANSWERED

"Dad, what do they call a man who eats only vegetables?"

"A vegetarian, son."

"And one who eats people?"

"A humanitarian. Now run along and play."—*Philadelphia Public Ledger*.

HE QUALIFIED

"Tommy Atkins" pleaded exemption from church parade on the ground that he was an agnostic. The sergeant-major assumed an expression of innocent interest.

"Don't you believe in the Ten Commandments?" he mildly asked the bold freethinker.

"Not one, sir," was the reply.

"What! Not the rule about keeping the Sabbath?"

"No, sir."

"Ah, well, you're the very man I've been looking for to scrub out the canteen."—*Tit-Bits*.

MORE LABOR TROUBLES

Wilson Barrett used to tell an amusing story against himself. At a time when he had a lot of workmen redecorating his private residence, thinking to give them a treat, he asked if, after work one evening, they would like to have seats to go and see him play in "The Lights of London," at the Princess' Theater.

They said they didn't mind if they did, and having complimentary tickets, all went on a Saturday night to see their employer's performance.

At the end of the week Barrett's eye caught sight of this item against each workman's name on the pay-sheet: "Saturday night. Four hours' overtime at Princess' Theater, eight shillings."—*Tit-Bits*.

OBLIGING THE TEACHER

The teacher wanted some plums in order to give an object-lesson

during school hours, and, calling one of the small boys, she gave him ten cents and dispatched him to the fruit-stand down on the corner.

"Before you buy the plums, Willie," she cautioned, "you had better pinch one or two to make sure they are ripe."

Little Willie flitted away. Soon he came back and smilingly put the bag on the teacher's desk.

"Oh, thank you, Willie," said the teacher, taking up the bag. "Did you pinch one or two as I told you to do?"

"Did I?" was the gleeful response, "I pinched the whole bagful, and here's your ten cents."—*Ladies' Home Journal*.

IN PROPORTION

A girl, reading in a paper that fish was excellent brain-food, wrote to the editor:

"Dear Sir—Seeing as you say how fish is good for the brains, what kind of fish shall I eat?"

To this the editor replied:

"Dear Miss—Judging from the composition of your letter, I should advise you to eat a whale."—*Tit-Bits*.

WHY HE LOVED HIM

A prison missionary was insisting to one of the guards that there is some good in everybody. To prove it, she sought out the prison demon and found him stroking a huge tom-cat.

"There," said the woman, "a man who will pet a cat certainly has some love in his heart."

The guard sneered.

"Do you love that cat?" the woman asked the demon.

"Yes," he replied, still stroking the animal, "you bet I do; anybody who hurts that cat will do it over my dead body—he bit the warden this morning."—*Everybody's Magazine*.